



US, EU SANCTIONS ALREADY ERODING RUSSIA ECONOMY

Page 2



REPORT SUGGESTS POWELL UNAWARE OF CIA METHODS

Page 3

Aruba TODAY

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House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio strides to the House chamber on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, July 30, 2014, as lawmakers prepare to move on legislation authorizing an election-year lawsuit against President Barack Obama that accuses him of exceeding his powers in enforcing his health care law.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Divided US Chamber Approves Obama Lawsuit

ALAN FRAM

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A sharply divided U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday approved a Republican plan to file an election-season lawsuit against President Barack Obama contending that he has exceeded his con-

stitutional powers in the way he has enforced the 2010 health care law. Democrats say the lawsuit is a campaign-year stunt designed to draw conservative voters to the polls in congressional elections in November. They also say it may be a prelude to an effort to impeach Obama,

a suggestion which top Republicans say is groundless. Republicans say Obama has gone too far in selectively enforcing parts of the health care overhaul, the signature legislation of his presidency, such as by delaying the requirement that many employers provide health insurance for their

workers. They say they are protecting the Constitution's division of powers. The House vote was 225 to 201. Speculation about impeachment of Obama has been popular among conservative activists and some lawmakers, despite House Speaker John Boeh-

ner's dismissal of the idea. Democrats have capitalized on the speculation, sending fund-raising pleas to their own supporters warning that Republicans are out to impeach Obama and ruin his presidency.

Continued on Page 4

Sanctions will damage Russia if not lifted quickly

**LAURA MILLS
JUERGEN BAETZ
Associated Press**

MOSCOW (AP) — U.S. and European sanctions against Russia's energy and finance sectors are strong enough to cause deep, long-lasting damage within months unless Moscow persuades the West to repeal them by

als, bringing the total to 95 people and 23 entities that have been hit with EU-wide asset freezes and travel bans. They include three close associates of President Vladimir Putin: his former judo partner Arkady Rotenberg, and the two largest shareholders of Bank Rossiya; Yuri Kovalchuk and Nikolai

banking system," said Vladimir Tikhomirov, chief economist at financial services group BCS. He noted the banks are already having trouble raising money. "That would mean their ability to lend to other banks, smaller banks, is going to be more restricted also." Last year, about a third of the bonds issued

ed by Washington." The key will be how long the sanctions stay in place. In the short term, Russia has low public debt and enough money to support its banks. The lenders themselves have large reserves. In the longer term, the sanctions could hurt by fostering a climate of uncertainty — something inves-

NEWSBREAK 3 Putin allies hit with new EU sanctions

**JOHN DAHLBURG
Associated Press**

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union targeted Russian President Vladimir Putin's inner circle for the first time Wednesday for the Kremlin's actions in Ukraine, subjecting three of his long-time associates to EU-wide asset freezes and travel bans.

A total of eight people were added to the EU's sanctions list for allegedly undermining Ukraine's sovereignty or profiting from Moscow's takeover of Crimea, the EU's Official Journal showed. Three companies were also blacklisted.

Among the individuals was Arkady Rotenberg, Putin's former judo partner and a major shareholder of the civil engineering company Giprottransmost. The company has received a public contract to conduct a study on building a bridge from Russia to Crimea, the EU said. Also targeted was Yuri Kovalchuk, a longtime Putin acquaintance identified by the EU as co-founder of the Ozero Dacha, a cooperative society bringing together influential individuals around Russia's president. Kovalchuk is also the chairman and largest shareholder of Bank Rossiya, which has opened branches in Crimea since its unilateral annexation by Russia.

The third Putin ally on the sanctions list was Nikolai Shamalov, another Ozero Dacha co-founder and the second largest shareholder in Bank Rossiya. Rotenberg and Kovalchuk have been subject to similar U.S. sanctions since March.

The other five people targeted by the EU measures, which go into effect immediately, include the first deputy chief of staff of the Russian presidential administration and three pro-Moscow officials in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. □



Russian President Vladimir Putin, background center, heads the Cabinet meeting in the Novo-Ogaryovo residence, outside Moscow, Russia, Wednesday, July 30, 2014. The meeting focused on measures to encourage Russian companies to pull their assets back from offshore. The United States and the European Union on Tuesday announced a raft of new sanctions against Russian companies and banks over Moscow's support for separatists in Ukraine.

(AP Photo/Alexei Nikolsky)

withdrawing support for Ukrainian insurgents. The U.S. and European Union released details Wednesday of new sanctions aimed at hurting Russia's economy without doing undue damage to their own trade interests, punishment for alleged Russian support for Ukrainian rebels and Russia's annexation of the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea. The sanctions go further than earlier penalties — which had largely targeted individuals — by broadly limiting the trade of weapons and of technology that can be used in the oil and military industries. The EU also put its capital markets off-limits to Russian state-owned banks. The bloc blacklisted three more companies and eight additional individu-

Shamalov. Experts said the sanctions wouldn't have a tremendous impact in the short term, but if left in place for months will stifle development in the Russian economy and sap its financial sector. Already, economists have revised downward their predictions for Russian growth this year, with some saying the country will go into recession. The biggest immediate impact is likely to come from the financial sanctions. U.S. officials said roughly 30 percent of Russia's banking sector assets would now be constrained by sanctions. In a first sign of concern, Russia's central bank said Wednesday that it would support banks targeted by the penalties. "State-owned banks are the core of the Russian

by Russia's majority state-owned banks — 7.5 billion euros (\$10 billion) — were placed in EU financial markets, according to EU officials. The measures against Russian banks, which exempt short-term borrowing, are meant to inflict just enough pain without causing them to collapse. "The aim is not to destroy these banks," said a senior EU official, briefing reporters on condition of anonymity prior to the sanctions' official announcement. "We do not want them to get into a liquidity crisis." Russia's foreign ministry complained vocally about the sanctions, criticizing the U.S. for "advancing baseless claims" about its role in Ukraine in a "pretentious, prosecutorial manner." It criticized the EU for allowing its policy to be "dictat-

tors loathe. Some foreign investors are likely to stay away from the sanctioned companies. Already, as the Ukraine crisis deepened, Russia's central bank has been forced to raise interest rates several times to stabilize the currency as foreign investors sold it off; investors are expected to pull more than \$100 billion out of Russia this year. The central bank last raised rates on Friday in anticipation of the latest sanctions. Rising rates hurt the economy by making borrowing more expensive; VTB bank chairman Mikhail Zadornov told the Financial Times that the company's retail arm cut new loans to small business by 20 percent in the first half of 2014. Even ordinary Russians were worried. □

US imposes travel ban on some Venezuelans

HANNAH DREIER
BRADLEY KLAPPER
Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Amid escalating tensions with Venezuela, the U.S. State Department on Wednesday announced a travel ban for officials of the socialist government it said committed human rights abuses during a crackdown on opposition protests.

In imposing the sanctions, the strongest U.S. action yet against the South American country, the State Department jumped ahead of Congress, which has been pondering a similar move since the height of the protests in March.

The action targets 24 high-ranking Venezuelan officials including Cabinet ministers, senior judges and high-ranking military, police and National Guard members, said congressional aides, who agreed to reveal those details only if granted anonymity because they were not authorized to speak on the matter.

The State Department's announcement cited the months-long street protest movement that left dozens of people dead earlier this year and said the Venezuelan government had responded in many instances with "arbitrary detentions and excessive use of force." The department declined to publicly say who it was targeting, citing confidentiality rules surrounding visa processing. A congressional aide said the department told staffers its list was similar to a list of 23 Venezuelan officials singled out for sanctions by U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, a Florida Republican, in May.

Rubio's list names governors, judges, Venezuela's chief prosecutor and the country's minister of justice and the interior.

On Wednesday, Rubio, a chief advocate for increased U.S. involvement in Venezuela, called the travel ban a "first step," and urged the administration to do more. Others on Capitol Hill said Congress should toughen the State Department's measures by adding family members to the list of banned Venezuelans and freezing assets.

The ban comes days after a dramatic diplomatic dustup between the two countries.

On Sunday, Venezuela secured the release of a former Venezuelan general who had been detained in Aruba at the request of U.S. authorities. The U.S. has accused Hugo Carvajal, the former head of Venezuela's military intelligence, of using his high-level position to protect drug traffickers.

Carvajal was expected to face extradition to the U.S. Instead, Aruba released him and he flew back to a hero's welcome in Caracas. The State Department accused Venezuela of using threats against the Dutch Caribbean territory to circumvent international justice, a charge emphatically denied by Venezuelan officials.

On Wednesday, Venezuela Foreign Minister Elias Jaua called the new U.S. sanctions a desperate act of a country at sea in a changing world.

After Carvajal's detention, it's unclear whether top-ranking Venezuelan officials would have attempted to set foot in the U.S. — travel ban or no.

The administration of President Barack Obama had previously opposed sanctions, saying such measures could help the Venezuelan government rally its base and cast the U.S. as a scapegoat for the oil-exporting country's continuing economic crisis. The two nations have not had ambassadors in each other's capitals since 2010. □

Report: CIA techniques kept from Powell

KEN DILANIAN
EILEEN SULLIVAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Senate report on the CIA's interrogation and detention practices after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks concludes that the agency initially kept the secretary of state and some U.S. ambassadors in the dark

findings outlined in the document. A former senior CIA official said the secretary of state at the time, Colin Powell, eventually was informed about the program and sat in meetings in which harsh interrogation techniques were discussed. But Powell may not have been informed when the techniques were first used

State Department's proposed talking points in response to the Senate report. It's not clear who wrote it or how influential it will be in tailoring the response. It is common practice for the White House to solicit talking points from key agencies involved in responding to a major news event, which the release



FILE - In this Jan. 8, 2004, file photo, then-Secretary of State Colin Powell speaks at a news conference in Washington at the State Department. A document circulating among White House staff says a Senate report on the CIA's interrogation and detention practices after the 9/11 attacks concludes that the agency initially kept Powell and some U.S. ambassadors in the dark about harsh techniques and secret prisons.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

about harsh techniques and secret prisons, according to a document circulating among White House staff. The still-classified report also says some ambassadors who were informed about interrogations of al-Qaida detainees at so-called black sites in their countries were instructed not to tell their superiors at the State Department, the document says.

The 6,300-page Senate report on the CIA's interrogation program has been years in the making. The findings are expected to reveal additional details about the CIA's program and renew criticisms that the U.S. engaged in torture as it questioned terrorism suspects after the 2001 attacks.

A congressional official who has read the Senate report confirmed that it makes the

in 2002, the official said. A spokeswoman Wednesday said Powell would not comment.

The former CIA official said it would be standard practice for ambassadors informed about a covert operation to be instructed not to share it with others who did not have a "need to know," as determined by the National Security Agency. Ambassadors in countries in which the CIA set up black sites to interrogate prisoners were usually told about it, said the official, who, like others interviewed for this story, would not be quoted by name because some of the information remains classified. It's not entirely clear exactly which U.S. officials knew about the practices at the time they began.

The four-page White House document contains the

of the Senate report will be. This document is significant because it also reveals some of the report's conclusions as well as the State Department's concerns about how the program will be portrayed around the world. The Senate report, a summary of which is expected to be made public in the coming weeks, concludes that the CIA used brutal techniques on detainees that failed to produce life-saving intelligence, and then misled Congress and the Justice Department about the interrogation program.

Current and former CIA officials hotly dispute the conclusion that the techniques — which included waterboarding or simulated drowning — failed to produce crucial information, as do some Senate Republicans. □

Divided US chamber approves Obama lawsuit

Continued from front

Republicans, who are expected to keep their House majority after November's elections and hope to gain control of the Senate, say Obama has enforced laws as he wants to, dangerously shifting power to the presidency from Congress.

he took actions on his own because Congress isn't doing anything to help him. Every Republican lawmaker opposed Obama's health care overhaul. Republicans say Obama has illegally changed the law by using executive actions that don't require Congress approval. The

tify Congress in advance when he traded five Taliban members held at the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for the captive Army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, and unilaterally preventing the deportation of some children who illegally immigrated to the U.S. Republican Rep Doug

Republicans also point to Obama's comments in January that 2014 would be a "year of action" to implement his priorities, which he said he would do "with or without Congress" by using his "pen and the phone."

Despite these accusations, Republicans intend to limit their lawsuit to a narrow claim: that Obama has failed to faithfully carry out the health care law that, according to polls, remains poorly received by the public.

Republican officials say they decided to narrow the suit's focus after being advised by lawyers that their chances of succeeding would be stronger.

That seems unlikely to satisfy some conservatives, such as 2008 vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin. "It's time to impeach; and on behalf of America we should vehemently oppose any politician on the left or right who would hesitate in voting for articles of impeachment," she recently wrote.

Yet her opinion is not widely shared outside the Republican base. In a CNN survey last week, more than half of all Republicans said they favor Obama's impeachment, but that level that fell to one-third of the overall electorate. Among independents, 63 percent opposed it.

A lawsuit is also generally unpopular, but less so than impeachment would be, the poll indicated. □



House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer of Md., joined by Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., left, and Rep. Kerry Bentivolio, R-Mich., criticizes the efforts of Republicans to muscle legislation through the House authorizing an election-year lawsuit against President Barack Obama that accuses him of exceeding his powers in enforcing his health care law, Wednesday, July 30, 2014, during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington.

(AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Obama said the vote to file a lawsuit is taking away from time the lawmakers could be spending on issues important to the American people. He described the measure as a "political stunt" and said

White House and Democrats say he's acted legally and within his powers as chief executive.

Republicans say there are other examples of Obama exceeding his powers. These include failing to no-

Lambourn said, "The people's representatives will not turn a blind eye to the lawlessness of this president. We will do whatever it takes to hold him and future occupants of the Oval Office accountable."

Senate opens new debate on immigration bill

ASHLEY PARKER
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WASHINGTON - Senate Democrats opened debate Wednesday on an emergency measure to help stem the flood of young migrants from Central America, though they still face two uphill votes - another procedural, and one of final passage - before they can head home for the five-week August recess having passed legislation to address the crisis at the southern border.

The first procedural measure passed 63-33, with 11 Republicans joining their Democratic counterparts in favor of opening debate, and two Democrats - Sens. Kay Hagan of North Carolina and Mary L. Landrieu of Louisiana - opposing it.

The Democratic proposal, which also includes money to combat wildfires in Western states and for Israel's missile defense system known as Iron Dome, would allocate \$2.7 billion toward what both President Barack

Obama and congressional lawmakers have called an urgent humanitarian crisis. The amount falls short of the \$3.7 billion in emergency funds the president originally requested, but it is far more than the \$659 million House Republicans are proposing in their alternative.

The House plan would change a 2008 law intended to combat human trafficking, to make it easier to more quickly return the Central American migrant

children to their home countries.

It would also increase the National Guard presence on the southern border; increase the number of immigration judges to speed up court proceedings; and allow Border Patrol agents onto federally controlled national park and monument land along the southern border.

On Wednesday, the White House issued a veto threat against the House legislation. □

US lawyer sues GM on behalf of 658 plaintiffs

DETROIT (AP) — A Texas lawyer has filed a lawsuit against General Motors on behalf of 658 people who were injured or killed in crashes allegedly caused by faulty ignition switches. The lawsuit filed Tuesday in U.S. District Court in Manhattan in New York City names 29 people who were killed in crashes and 629 who were hurt. All the crashes occurred after GM emerged from bankruptcy protection in July of 2009. That makes them exempt from GM's efforts to shield itself from claims due to crashes that occurred before the bankruptcy, attorney Robert Hilliard said in a statement.

Hilliard also said he will ask judges for permission to file another 248 cases from before the bankruptcy, including 21 deaths.

"It's certainly not a legal given that GM will be successful in its attempts to use this 'get-out-of-jail-free' bankruptcy card," said Hilliard, of Corpus Christi, Texas.

The lawsuit alleges that GM knew about the defective switches that can cause engines to stall since as early as 2001, yet it didn't recall any cars until this year. The switches can cut off the engine, knocking out power steering and brakes and disabling the air bags, which wouldn't protect people in a crash. The lawsuit seeks in excess of \$75,000 in damages for each plaintiff.

The filing comes just days before compensation expert Kenneth Feinberg is to start taking injury and death claims on behalf of GM. Feinberg, who handled claims for the BP Gulf Oil Spill and the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, has said GM has placed no limit on the total amount of money he can spend to compensate victims. Feinberg is to start taking claims on Friday and will accept applications through the end of the year. Those who settle with Feinberg must give up their right to sue. □

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Trafficking bust reveals worries over missing kids

ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When FBI agents and police officers fanned out across the U.S. last month in a weeklong effort to rescue child sex trafficking victims, they pulled minors as young as 11 from hotel rooms, truck stops and homes.

Among the 168 juveniles recovered was a population that child welfare advocates say especially concerns them: children who were never reported missing in the first place.

Advocates say the round-up reinforces the need for a standardized, nationwide approach to report children as missing, especially those absent from state foster care systems who are seen as most vulnerable to abuse. Concerns over unaccounted-for children aren't new, but they're receiving fresh attention amid heightened awareness of child sex trafficking. State and federal efforts are underway to streamline how police are alerted when kids go missing.

"This has been a movement that I would say over the last year has really galvanized," said John Ryan, president of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Legislation pending in Congress would require child welfare agencies to alert police and the center, which has specialized response teams and other resources, within 24 hours of a child's disappearance.

The current patchwork of state and federal policies has yielded what advocates describe as a fractured safety net with little accountability.

Though states may have policies encouraging child welfare agencies to re-

port missing children to law enforcement, most don't have laws requiring that notification, according to the missing children center. That means children can disappear without police knowing they're missing or being directed to look for them.

A federal law does require law enforcement agencies to enter missing children into the FBI's National Crime Information Center — a database available to law enforcement nationwide — but that presumes police are provided the names or have specific enough details about a child. A 2011 Government Accountability Office report said law enforcement agencies are having trouble getting timely information from state agencies. Some children who are feared missing turn up after just a few hours. In some cases, children involved in sex trafficking leave their homes to meet their pimps for work and then return before their absence is noticed. The center worries about them as well.

The missing children center says it received more than 57,000 missing-child reports

between 2009 and 2013, many of them considered endangered runaways. The organization says two-thirds of the children re-

ported missing last year who likely were sex trafficking victims were in the care of child welfare systems when they ran away. The difficulties aren't lim-



Authorities raid a hotel in Jackson, Mississippi. When FBI agents and police officers fanned out across the country last month in a weeklong effort to rescue child sex trafficking victims, they pulled kids as young as 11 from dingy motel rooms, truck stops and homes. (AP Photo/FBI)

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ported missing last year who likely were sex trafficking victims were in the care of child welfare systems when they ran away. The difficulties aren't lim-

than from families under state supervision, the FBI said. But experts say they're concerned that children in foster care, who often come from more troubled

backgrounds, are particularly vulnerable to being targeted by sex traffickers. "These pimps really know how to appeal to these kids. A lot of these pimps come from similar backgrounds as well. They can lure them in by providing them care, feeding, attention," Joseph Campbell, assistant director of the FBI's criminal investigative division, said in an interview.

In a transient child welfare system, it's a challenge for states to keep perfect track of children under their care. Many run away repeatedly but return on their own, giving guardians little incentive to report them missing each time. The Internet enables children to be prostituted through online advertisements instead of street corners, making it easier than ever for trafficking to cross state lines.

About one-third of the kids rescued in the most recent Operation Cross Country had been reported missing, Osborn said. Some of the others hadn't been gone for long enough to raise concerns from their guardians. □

Man pleads guilty in US cartel house case

ST. PAUL, Minnesota (AP)

— One of the four men accused of keeping a "stash house" for a Mexican drug cartel in St. Paul has pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute methamphetamine.

Antonio Navarro, 19, entered the plea in U.S. District Court in Minneapolis on Tuesday, clearing the way for the state to proceed on charges that include kidnapping, assault and robbery, the St. Paul Pioneer Press reported.

Navarro and the three

other men are accused of kidnapping and torturing two Minneapolis teens they suspected of stealing drugs and money from the house in a quiet St. Paul neighborhood.

Navarro and Juan Ricardo Elenes Villalvazo, 32, are accused of keeping the "stash house" for the cartel, though court documents don't say which one and federal prosecutors declined to comment. Drugs were delivered to the rental house and hidden there along with cash,

prosecutors said.

Jesus Ramirez, 31, and Jonatan Delgado Alvarez, 22, both of Los Angeles, flew to the Twin Cities in April after meth and \$200,000 in cash were stolen from the house, the federal indictment said. Prosecutors say all four men kidnapped two Minneapolis teens suspected in the theft, brought them to the house and tortured them. The teens were released after the men determined they didn't know what happened to

the drugs and money, but not before nearly severing one teen's finger with a scissors as they were interrogating him.

Navarro, as well as Ramirez and Alvarez, have been charged in Ramsey County District Court with kidnapping, assault and robbery. That case was put on hold, pending the outcome of the federal charges.

Villalvazo, who prosecutors say was responsible for injuring the teen's finger, was still at large. □

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Fed offers a dual message on US economy

M. CRUTSINGER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve offered a mixed message on the U.S. economy Wednesday: Growth is strengthening, and the unemployment rate is steadily falling. Yet by some measures, the job market remains subpar.

are set to end in October. Most economists think a rate increase is about a year away despite a strengthening economy. The government estimated Wednesday that the economy grew at a fast 4 percent annual rate last quarter. On Friday, the government

full-time jobs and the proportion of the unemployed who have been out of work for more than six months. The Fed also tweaked its statement to say inflation had risen closer to its 2 percent target. The statement said concerns that inflation would persistently run below the Fed's 2 percent tar-

that has been made," the statement said.

Economists said the Fed's statement showed that Yellen remains firmly in control of the policy committee even though Plosser and other officials who are more concerned about inflation are starting to express their views more openly. This group is known as hawks. Yellen's camp, which is more focused on maximizing employment, is known as doves.

Another hawk, Richard Fisher, president of the Fed's Dallas regional bank, wrote an opinion piece in the Wall Street Journal this week that suggested it was time for the Fed to start moving away from its ultra-low rate policies.

David Jones, chief economist at DMK Advisors, said a new phrase in the Fed statement about a "significant underutilization of labor resources" showed that Yellen's more dovish views held sway in the discussions.

"The Fed is continuing to express concern about labor markets and expressing no alarm about the rise in inflation," Jones said. "Yellen is still a dove at heart."

Though the statement set no specific date for the Fed's bond purchases to end, Yellen told Congress this month that they would likely end at the October meeting with a final \$15 billion cut. That would imply a further \$10 billion reduction at the Fed's next meeting in September.

In October, the Fed's investment portfolio will be nearing \$4.5 trillion — five times its size before the financial crisis erupted in September 2008. □

Survey: US adds 218,000 jobs in July

C. S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A private survey shows that businesses hired at a healthy pace in July, though the job gains slowed from the previous month.

Private employers added 218,000 jobs, down from 281,000 in June, payroll provider ADP said Wednesday. It was the fourth straight month of job gains above 200,000, a healthy pace that usually is enough to lower the unemployment rate.

The figures suggest that the government's jobs report, to be released Friday, will also show a solid increase. But the ADP numbers cover only private businesses and often diverge from the government's more comprehensive report.

Economists forecast that the government's report will show that 225,000 jobs were added in July, while the unemployment rate stayed at 6.1 percent, according to a survey by FactSet.

"It feels to me like the job market is humming," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics, which helps compile the report.

The job gains were mostly broad-based. Construction added 12,000 positions, most of which likely pay mid-level wages. Retail, shipping and utilities gained 52,000 and professional and business services, which mostly include higher-paying jobs, gained 61,000. □



Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen speaks at the International Monetary Fund in Washington. On Wednesday, July 30, 2014, the Federal Reserve reiterated its plan to keep short-term rates low "for a considerable time" after its bond purchases end.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

A statement the Fed issued after a two-day policy meeting suggested it wants to see further improvement before it starts raising its key short-term interest rate. It offered no clearer hint of when it will raise that rate. Instead, the Fed reiterated its plan to keep short-term rates low "for a considerable time" after ends its monthly bond purchases. The Fed said it will slow the pace of its purchases by another \$10 billion to \$25 billion a month. The purchases, which have been intended to keep long-term borrowing rates low,

is expected to report a sixth straight month of healthy 200,000-plus job growth. The unemployment rate has dropped to 6.1 percent. At the start of last year, it was 7.9 percent. The Fed revised the wording of its previous statement to note that while the unemployment rate has dropped steadily, the job market is still struggling in other ways. It didn't specify what it meant. But Chair Janet Yellen expressed concern to Congress this month about stagnant wage growth, many part-time workers who can't find

get had "diminished somewhat." But it expressed no concerns about the slight acceleration in prices.

The Fed's action Wednesday was approved on a 9-1 vote, with Charles Plosser, president of the Fed's Philadelphia regional bank, dissenting. The statement said Plosser objected to reiterating that the Fed's key short-term rate would likely remain at a record low near zero "for a considerable time" after its bond purchases end.

Plosser felt that language did not "reflect the considerable economic progress



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US Financial Front:

A vigorous American economy appears to be emerging

M. CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy has rebounded with vigor from a grim start to 2014 and should show renewed

to life after a dismal winter in which it shrank at a sharp 2.1 percent annual rate. The government upgraded that figure from a previous estimate of a 2.9 percent drop. But it was

The second quarter's growth in the gross domestic product — the total output of goods and services — was the fastest since a 4.5 percent increase in July-September quarter of

rates in March next year," Ashworth wrote in a research note.

Ashworth is among a group of economists who think growing strength in the job market and the economy will prod the Fed to move faster to raise rates to make sure inflation doesn't get out of hand. Stock prices turned generally negative in the wake of the GDP report because some investors saw a greater likelihood that the Fed would raise rates sooner than expected.

"We're at the point where we're not sure if good news is good news or bad news," said Jim Paulsen, chief investment strategist at Wells Capital Management.

The GDP report showed that one measure of inflation rose 2 percent last quarter, up from a 1.3 percent rise in the first quarter. The Fed's inflation target is 2 percent, and for two

years the GDP measure of inflation has been running below that level. Low inflation has given the Fed leeway to focus on boosting growth to fight high unemployment.

In its statement Wednesday, the Fed noted that inflation had risen closer to its 2 percent target. The statement said concerns that inflation would run persistently below the Fed's 2 percent target had "diminished somewhat." But it expressed no concerns about the slight acceleration in prices.

The economy's sudden contraction in the first quarter had resulted from several factors. A severe winter disrupted activity across industries and kept consumers away from shopping malls and auto dealerships. Consumer spending slowed to an annual growth rate of 1.2 percent, the weakest in nearly three years. □



Construction workers build a commercial complex in Springfield, Ill. The government issued positive news in its first of three estimates of how fast the U.S. economy grew in the April-June quarter on Wednesday, July 30, 2014. (AP Photo/Seth Perlman)

strength into next year. That was the general view of analysts Wednesday after the government estimated that the economy grew at a fast 4 percent annual rate in the April-June quarter. Consumers, businesses and governments joined to fuel the second-quarter expansion. The government also said growth was more robust last year than it had previously estimated. Whether the healthier expansion will lead the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates sooner than expected is unclear. In a statement it issued Wednesday after a policy meeting, the Fed offered no clearer hint of when it will start raising its benchmark short-term rate. The economy sprang back

still the biggest contraction since early 2009 in the depths of the Great Recession. Last quarter's bounce-back reinforced analysts' view that the economy's momentum is extending into the second half of the year, when they forecast annual growth of around 3 percent. The government also updated its estimates of growth leading into this year. They show the economy expanded in the second half of 2013 at the fastest pace in a decade and more than previously estimated. The revised data also show that the economy grew faster in 2013 than previously estimated, though more slowly in 2011 and 2012 than earlier thought.

2013. At the same time, a higher trade deficit slowed growth as imports outpaced an increase in exports. Paul Ashworth, chief U.S. economist at Capital Economics, said that given last quarter's rebound, he's boosting his estimate for growth this year to 2 percent, up from a previous 1.7 percent forecast. Ashworth said the economy's growth also supported his view that the Fed will be inclined to start raising rates early next year. Most economists have been predicting that the Fed would wait until mid-2015 to start raising rates. "This GDP report supports our view that an improving economy will persuade the Fed to begin raising

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Teens love vacation selfies; adults, not so much

BETH J. HARPAZ

AP Travel Editor

NEW YORK (AP) — Jacque Whitt's trip to the Galapagos with a group of teenagers was memorable not just

In addition, when traveling teens spend time taking selfies, "they're so busy documenting, I wonder whether they're actually experiencing it,"

cized Auschwitz selfie also shows "the risks of kids posting on social media" when they don't know what's appropriate. Breanna Mitchell, the young woman who

studied World War II history with her father and they'd planned to visit historic sites together, but he died before they could make the trip. Her selfie from the grounds of the concentration camp was her way of saying, "I finally made it here. I finally got where me and my daddy had always said we were going to go," she told TakePart Live. Looking back now on the selfie, she says, "I just went so wrong with that."

Still, most travel selfies are innocent and purely celebratory — as well as being a way for teens to keep in touch with peers. Taylor Garcia, 17, who traveled to Texas this summer on a family road trip from Oklahoma, says selfies are a fun way to remember places like Disney, SeaWorld and the Caribbean, but she also takes them "because I want to show my friends what I'm doing."

Her mom, Melissa Garcia, who posts her own family trip photos on her blog, ConsumerQueen.com, encourages the selfies. "It's a great way to preserve

18, who shared selfies from a trip to Portugal, doesn't see the point of posting travel pictures without familiar faces in them. She wants a photo that shows, "Hey, I'm having fun! And I like seeing them of other people, too."

But at least one tour company, Tauck, has a written policy discouraging digital devices. For Tauck's Bridges program, which specializes in multi-generational family trips, guests are asked to "turn off and stow their smart phones, tablets and other portable electronic devices during shared group time."

Tauck spokesman Tom Armstrong says the company understands that digital devices can help teens pass the time during long car rides, flights or other downtime, "and we have no issue with that." But "when the tour director is giving commentary, or during museum visits, we think that our younger guests will actually get much more out of their trip if they're engaged in the experience and not distracted."



A group of American high school students, from left, Isabela Gettier, Elizabeth Thomas, Hannah Whitt Linsly and Stephanie Kirby pose for a group selfie on a trip to the Galapagos
(AP Photo/Adios Adventure Travel, Jacqui Whitt)

for the scenery and wildlife, but also for the way the kids preserved their memories. It was, said Whitt, a "selfie fest."

For this generation, "digital devices are now part of the interpretive experience," said Whitt, co-founder of Adios Adventure Travel.

Indeed, many parents love seeing their kids taking selfies and posting to social media when they travel. It shows "they are engaged and excited about where they are and what they are doing," said Susan Austin, a photographer and Iowa mom. "To some, it might be bragging, but I think it's more about a way today's teens connect with and feel part of a group."

But some adults think there's a downside to vacation selfies. They see them as narcissistic distractions that can detract from the travel experience. And they point to controversial examples — like a smiling selfie from Auschwitz posted to Twitter — as proof of the potential for poor judgment when young travelers use social media.

said Peg Streep, who writes about psychology and millennials. "What should be an experience of learning and growth instead just says, 'Look at me.' It's a narcissistic moment that's really about getting likes." Streep pointed to a study by Linda Henkel of Fairfield University in Connecticut that found museum visitors remember more about what they've seen if they don't take photos of the objects they're viewing. That suggests that any type of picture-taking can take "you out of the moment of the experience and shifts your attention."

Another concern is practical. A real-time selfie from a far-off place tells the world you're not home. Leora Halpern Lanz, of Long Island, New York, loves it when her three kids take vacation selfies because it's their way "of validating where they were." But they're not allowed to post images until the trip is over: "I don't need their friends or friends of friends knowing the house is empty."

Lanz says the widely criti-

took the smiling Auschwitz selfie, received death



Abigail Austin takes a selfie on a trip to Lisbon, Portugal, when she was 17. Young travelers say they enjoy taking selfies to preserve and curate travel memories while sharing experiences with friends. But some older travelers worry that spending too much time on social media can be a

threats and messages urging her to kill herself after the image went viral. In a video interview with TakePart Live, Mitchell said the selfie was misinterpreted. She'd

memories," she said, adding that other families have contacted her after seeing the photos to get advice for their trips.

Austin's daughter Abigail,

The bottom line, says Whitt: "Like all new emerging technology, the devices can be fun and wholesome, entertainment for all ages, or misused." □



Catalonia's regional president Artur Mas, right, and Spain's Premier Mariano Rajoy, left, pose for the photographers before a meeting at the Moncloa Palace in Madrid, Spain, Wednesday, July 30, 2014. (AP Photo/Andres Kudacki)

Catalonia leader vows to push ahead for independence vote

RAPHAEL MINDER

© 2014 New York Times

MADRID - The leader of Catalonia, the region that accounts for one-fifth of Spain's economy, told Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy during a meeting on Wednesday that he would go ahead with a vote on independence in November that the central government in Madrid has vowed to block.

The meeting, in Madrid, was the first between Rajoy and Artur Mas, the head of the Catalan regional government, since Catalonia's governing coalition agreed last December on the timing and format of an independence vote.

For that reason alone, the meeting was considered something of a breakthrough. But afterward, Mas told reporters that his secessionist plans remained on track and that "there is no proposal on the part of the state to resolve this political conflict."

Mas said the meeting was characterized by "a climate of open dialogue," and he presented Rajoy with a set of economic proposals, including plans to boost infrastructure spending in Catalonia, which the prime minister agreed to study. But the outcome did little to decrease the sense of crisis looming before the country if no agreement can be reached to head off the secessionist vote.

Mas started his secessionist push in 2012, after a huge pro-independence march in Barcelona, the Catalan capital. Another giant protest march is expected on Sept. 11, which is celebrated by Catalans as their national day and falls a week before an independence referendum in Scotland that is seen as a bellwether for Catalonia's own prospects.

Rajoy reiterated on Wednesday his opposition to any Catalan vote that violates Spain's Constitution. His veto of any Catalan vote also received backing this week from Pedro Sánchez, the newly elected secretary-general of the main Socialist opposition party.

But little has blunted the momentum toward the secessionist vote. For now, the biggest challenge may have erupted last week, when Jordi Pujol, the patriarch of Catalan politics, admitted committing tax fraud by hiding money offshore. At least three of his children are also the target of separate investigations for suspected financial crimes, including money laundering and bribery.

The legal problems of Pujol, 84, and his family are threatening to discredit Catalonia's governing party, Convergence, which Pujol founded and ran for more than two decades until 2003, and which Mas now leads. Mas has argued that the Pujol scandal is a personal issue that affects neither his government nor his secessionist push. □

Ukraine:

Clashes keep experts from crash site

DMITRY LOVETSKY

Associated Press

DONETSK, Ukraine (AP) —

Almost two weeks after Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was blown out of the sky, the remains of some passengers are feared rotting in the 90-degree (32-degree Celsius) midsummer heat, deepening the frustration of relatives desperate to recover the bodies of their loved ones.

Fighting between Ukrainian forces and separatist rebels has kept away international police charged with securing the site, a sprawling area of farmland

bringing them back is his government's top priority.

But Dutch officials were gloomy Wednesday about the prospects of reaching the site any time soon.

"We don't expect the security situation to improve enough over the next few days to make this possible," said Pieter-Jaap Aalbersberg, head of the Dutch-led recovery mission.

Two crucial pieces of evidence — the flight recorders — have already been retrieved and analyzed, however.

The U.S. and Ukrainian governments say the Boe-

get to the wreckage zone, observers from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe left in two vehicles from the rebel-held city of Donetsk but got only as far as the city's outskirts.

The observers talked with rebels and turned back after being "warned of gunfire on the route and in the surrounding areas," the Dutch said in a statement. Recent offensives by the Ukrainian army have enabled it to take back swaths of territory from the rebels. But the fighting has edged ever closer to the



Alexander Hug, deputy head of the OSCE mission to Ukraine, left, his colleagues and a pro-Russian rebel, 2nd left, examine a map as they try to estimate security conditions outside the city of Donetsk, eastern Ukraine Wednesday, July 30, 2014. (AP Photo/Dmitry Lovetsky)

and villages. And until it's secured, there is no way for forensic experts to gather up any remaining bodies or collect debris for analysis.

Even the rebels — who initially oversaw the collection of more than 200 of the 298 bodies in a disorganized, widely criticized effort — have stopped their work, saying attacks from the Ukrainian military have forced them to focus on defending themselves.

It remains unclear exactly how many bodies remain and what condition they are in after being exposed for so long to the elements. Dutch officials are adamant there are still bodies to be recovered, and Prime Minister Mark Rutte has said repeatedly that

ing 777 was brought down July 17 by a Russian-made missile fired by eastern Ukraine's pro-Moscow separatists. The separatists deny it; Russia denies providing the Buk missile launcher and says the Ukrainian military may have shot the plane down. After the investigative team's failure to reach the site on Wednesday, the United Nations called on both sides in Ukraine's grinding civil conflict to cease hostilities in the area. "The families of the victims of this horrific tragedy deserve closure and the world demands answers. International teams must be allowed to conduct their work," U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. In their latest attempt to

crash zone.

"We are still waiting and it is a miserable process," said Jasmine Calehr, the grandmother of two Dutch brothers who died in the crash.

Despite her mounting frustration, Calehr said she did not want investigators to go unless it was safe.

"Other people are not supposed to risk their lives," she said. "But that there is nobody strong enough to put pressure on a bunch of rebels is very painful."

Ukraine's U.N. Ambassador Yuriy Sergeyev said in New York that Ukrainian forces have adhered to President Petro Poroshenko's order not to conduct operations within a 40-kilometer (24-mile) radius of the crash site. □

Iraqi anger rises as militants attack cultural history

TIM ARANGO

© 2014 New York Times

BAGHDAD - When the Sunni extremists ruling Mosul destroyed the shrine of a prophet whose story features in the traditions of Islam, Christianity and Judaism - the most important of nearly two dozen marked for destruction by the Islamic State group in the first seven weeks of its reign - small groups of residents

gathered to mourn.

"We were crying when they detonated it," said Abdulmalik Mustafa, a 32-year-old unemployed man who lives near the site, believed to be the tomb of the biblical prophet Jonah, which was razed last week. "We couldn't believe that the history of Mosul has disappeared. I wanted to die."

Then rumors swirled that the

next target of the Islamic State militants would be the city's ancient leaning minaret, which is older than the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy and pictured on Iraq's 10,000-dinar bank note. Residents gathered at the minaret and, according to witnesses, angrily confronted the group's fighters. For now, the tower is still standing.

The angry public reaction

to the attacks on Mosul's cultural history - including the eviction of Christians by militants, which outraged many Muslim residents who celebrate Mosul's reputation for tolerance - appears to be the first spark of rebellion against harsh Islamic rule. Mosul is considered the country's second-largest city, with a population of about 1.5 million.

When militants swept into

the city June 10 and Iraqi soldiers shed their uniforms and fled, many residents seemed to cheer their arrival.

Much of Mosul's Sunni Arab population had become increasingly resentful of abuses suffered at the hands of Iraq's Shiite-dominated central government. For a time, people welcomed the new authority. □

Israeli strikes hit UN school, Gaza shopping area

Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip

(AP) — Israeli strikes hit a crowded shopping area in Gaza City Wednesday, hours after tank shells tore through the walls of a U.N. school crowded with war refugees in the deadliest of a series of air and artillery attacks that pushed the Palestinian death toll above 1,300 in more than three weeks of fighting.

The bloodshed came on the heels of an escalation by both sides fighting in the embattled coastal territory, further dimming prospects for a sustainable cease-fire despite international diplomatic efforts.

The attack on the U.N. school in the Jebaliya refugee camp was the second deadly strike on a U.N. compound in a week. Tank shells slammed into the compound before dawn, said Adnan Abu Hasna, a spokesman for the U.N.



Palestinians inspect damage to adjacent houses from a fallen minaret of the Al-Sousi mosque that was destroyed in an Israel strike, at the Shati refugee camp, in the northern Gaza Strip, Wednesday, July 30, 2014. Israeli aircraft struck dozens of Gaza sites on Wednesday, including five mosques it said were being used by militants, while several other areas came under tank fire.

(AP Photo/Leffteris Pitarakis)

Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA, which is sheltering more than 200,000 people displaced by the fighting

at dozens of U.N. schools across Gaza. Gaza health ministry official Ashraf al-Kidra said at least 17 peo-

ple were killed and about 90 wounded in the school strike. Four of the dead were killed just outside the

school compound, two in their home nearby and two in the street, after returning from pre-dawn prayers, their relatives said.

The Israeli military said it fired back after its soldiers were targeted by mortar rounds launched from the vicinity of the school.

Assad Sabah said he and his five children were huddling under desks in one of the classrooms because of the constant sound of tank fire throughout the night.

"We were scared to death," he said. "After 4:30 a.m., tanks started firing more. Three explosions shook the school."

"One classroom collapsed over the head of the people who were inside," he said. In one classroom, the front wall was blown out, leaving debris and bloodied clothing. Another strike tore a large round hole in the ceiling of a second-floor classroom. □

Fighting political Islam, Arab states allying with Israel

DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK

© 2014 New York Times

CAIRO - Battling Palestinian militants in Gaza two years ago, Israel found itself pressed from all sides by unfriendly Arab neighbors to end the fighting.

Not this time. After the military ouster of the Islamist government in Cairo last year, Egypt has led a new coalition of Arab states - including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan - that has effectively lined up with Israel in its fight against Hamas, the Islamist movement that con-

trols the Gaza Strip. That, in turn, may have contributed to the failure of the antagonists to reach a negotiated cease-fire even after more than three weeks of bloodshed. "The Arab states' loathing and fear of political Islam is so strong that it outweighs their allergy to Benjamin Netanyahu," the prime minister of Israel, said Aaron David Miller, a scholar at the Wilson Center in Washington and a former Middle East negotiator under several presidents. "I have never seen a situation like it, where you have so

many Arab states acquiescing in the death and destruction in Gaza and the pummeling of Hamas. The silence is deafening." Although Egypt is traditionally the key go-between in any talks with Hamas - deemed a terrorist group by the U.S. and Israel - the government in Cairo this time surprised Hamas by publicly proposing a cease-fire agreement that met most of Israel's demands and none by the Palestinian group. Hamas was tarred as intransigent when it immediately rejected it,

and Cairo has continued to insist that its proposal remains the starting point for any further discussions.

But as commentators sympathetic to the Palestinians slammed the proposal as a ruse to embarrass Hamas, Egypt's Arab allies praised it. King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia called President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi of Egypt the next day to commend it, Sissi's office said, in a statement that cast no blame on Israel but referred only to "the bloodshed of innocent civilians who are paying the price

for a military confrontation for which they are not responsible."

"There is clearly a convergence of interests of these various regimes with Israel," said Khaled Elgindy, a former adviser to Palestinian negotiators who is now a fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington. In the battle with Hamas, Elgindy said, the Egyptian fight against the forces of political Islam and the Israeli struggle against Palestinian militants were nearly identical. "Whose proxy war is it?" he asked. □

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Mass assault reported late in west China

ANDREW JACOBS

© 2014 New York Times

BEIJING - China's state media this week belatedly reported what was described as a terror attack in the troubled far west region of Xinjiang, where dozens of people were said to have been killed or wounded by assailants with knives and axes.

The assault happened Monday, the official news agency Xinhua and other state outlets reported. It was not clear why authorities had taken more than a day to release the news, although much of the violence in the region goes unreported by China's tightly controlled media.

Exile groups immediately disputed the government's account, saying the bloodshed had occurred when security forces opened fire on a group of people protesting government restrictions on the celebration of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month, and an earlier extrajudicial killing by the police.

The confrontation took place in the fertile crescent of southern Xinjiang, the scene of mounting violence. According to Xinhua, it began at a government building in Yarkant County and spread to surrounding streets, where assailants attacked passersby and set cars on fire.

The reports did not provide an exact number of casualties but said many of the dead were assailants who had been shot by the police. In a statement, The Uyghur American Association, an advocacy group in Washington, said more than 20 people had been killed and 70 arrested, citing sources in the region. □

Landslide hits Indian village, killing at least 17

MUNEZA NAQVI

Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) —

Torrential rains triggered a massive landslide that buried a remote village in western India on Wednesday, killing at least 17 people as it swept away scores of houses and possibly trapping many more people under debris, officials said. National rescue personnel reached the area before nightfall. But continuing rains and bad roads were hampering rescue efforts and preventing reinforcements from reaching Ambegaon, a village in Pune district in Maharashtra state, said Alok Avasthy, a National Disaster Response Force commander.

Rescuers planned to work overnight using floodlights mounted on two jeeps being sent from Pune along with earthmoving vehicles, according to Suresh Jadhav, a district official. He said 17 bodies had been recovered from under mud, rocks, trees and other debris. "Everything on the mountain came down," he said.

But with 70 homes buried and reports of another 158 hit by the landslide, rescuers anticipated more dead in the village, home to 704

people in the foothills of the Sahyadri Mountains.

The landslide hit early Wednesday morning, but details of the damage only began to trickle out several hours later. The area

"It's surrounded by hills and the area is very remote and rural, so it's taking us time to get there," Avasthy said. Some 250 disaster response personnel were in the area assisting local

work. Earlier Wednesday, one local commissioner, Prabhakar Deshmukh, said more than 150 people could be trapped.

Landslides are common in the area during the mon-



Mud and slush surround a building after a mudslide in Malin village, in the western Indian state of Maharashtra, Wednesday, July 30, 2014. Torrential rains triggered a massive landslide that buried a remote village in western India Wednesday, sweeping away scores of houses and possibly trapping more than 150 people, officials said. (AP Photo/Press Trust of India)

received 10.8 centimeters (4.25 inches) of rain on Tuesday, with a heavy downpour continuing through Wednesday.

A lack of Internet connectivity and poor cellphone service were also hampering the rescue operation.

police and medical teams who began clearing the debris. At least 100 ambulances were also sent to the area, Jadhav said.

"It is a small village and this happened very suddenly," local legislator Dilip Walse Patil told CNN-IBN TV net-

soon season, which runs from June through September. Pune district is about 150 kilometers (95 miles) southeast of Mumbai, India's commercial capital. The nearest medical center is about 15 kilometers (9 miles) from the village. □

Filipino hostages' release sparks hope for talks

JIM GOMEZ

Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) —

The release of four police officers abducted by Filipino communist guerrillas has sparked hopes that stalled peace talks will resume, a government official said Wednesday, although major obstacle remains.

New People's Army rebels released the police officers they seized in a July 10 attack on a police station in the remote southern

town of Alegria in Surigao del Norte province, saying it was a goodwill gesture to promote peace negotiations and a response to the appeals by the policemen's families.

Presidential peace process adviser Teresita Deles said the move "constitutes a potential building block" toward resuming the talks. "We invite the rebels to come to the table to find common solutions to our problems in peaceful dia-

logue," Deles said.

Presidential spokesman Edwin Lacierda urged the rebels to resume formal or informal negotiations with the government without conditions, a position echoed by the military.

"We are prepared to fight but that's the last thing we want," military spokesman Lt. col. Ramon Zagala said. "If there's a chance to return to the negotiating table and prevent more divisiveness in our country,

why not?" But Deles said the government was still against a rebel demand that detained comrades be released as a pre-condition to the talks resuming. The government stance led to the collapse of the talks, which are brokered by Norway. "We're not open to discussing releases at this point," Deles said.

The rebels have been fighting since 1969 in one of Asia's longest-running Marxist insurgencies. □

Argentines shrug off risk of financial default

**A. CALATRAVA
J. GOODMAN
Associated Press**

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — In 2001, it was ground zero for Argentina's financial earthquake. A neo-colonial architectural gem built long ago by the Bank of Boston, it became the focal point for angry mobs of protesters who stared down riot police to demand the return of their savings, which the government confiscated in a last-ditch, and ultimately failed, attempt to stay current on its debt.

Thirteen years later, as a midnight deadline to avert another default approached Wednesday, the mood on this iconic downtown street corner was one of resignation not panic. There were no protesters banging pots and pans on the bank's impenetrable cast-iron doors. Instead, office workers used their lunch break to tend to financial transactions at what is now a branch of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China.

While Argentine negotiators worked feverishly for days in New York to keep their country from falling behind on its debts, Daniel Gurof, a 50-year-old businessman, said he was more concerned about tangible problems such as the coun-

try's soaring crime rate. It was no matter that Gurof lost his life savings in 2001, when Argentina stopped payment on more than \$90 billion in bonds. This time, nobody expects such drastic, unpopular action.

default. The standoff stemmed from the refusal by a small group of creditors to accept a 70-percent write down of Argentina's defaulted debt. Rather than accept a deal that was signed by

more than \$1.3 billion — a decision upheld by the Supreme Court in June. Even as it negotiated with the holdout creditors, the government risked falling behind on debts owed to existing bondholders be-



Pedestrians walk past a branch of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, a target for anti-capitalist agitation ever since a 1927 anarchist bombing of what was then a Bank of Boston, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 2001, this neo-colonial bank building from Argentina's golden age was ground zero for the country's financial earthquake. Mobs of protesters stared down riot police to demand the return of their savings confiscated by the government in a last-ditch, and ultimately failed, attempt to stay current on its debt. Thirteen years later, as a midnight deadline to avert another default approached Wednesday, the mood across Argentina was one of resignation not panic.

(AP Photo/Natasha Pisarenko)

"I've got bigger problems than the vulture funds," he said, using the epithet preferred by President Cristina Fernandez to describe the hedge funds that brought Argentina to the edge of

more than 90 percent of creditors in 2005, the holdouts took Argentina before U.S. courts to demand full payment. A federal judge in New York sided with the creditors, awarding them

cause the federal court blocked a \$539 million interest payment intended for them.

Continued on page 27

Puerto Rico warns of strict water rationing

**DANICA COTO
Associated Press**

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Puerto Rico's government will impose strict water rationing for parts of the island's capital and surrounding areas if a cluster of thunderstorms headed toward the Caribbean does not generate enough rain, officials announced Wednesday.

More than half of the U.S. territory is experiencing abnormal dryness, with the worst conditions in its southern region and a small area in the northeast.

The lack of rain has caused an estimated \$20 million in crop losses, affecting coffee farms and the milk and

meat sectors the worst, agricultural secretary Myrna Comas has said.

In June, rain totaled less than an inch, compared with the month's average of more than 4 inches. There has been more rain in July, but the 3.40 inches (8.64 centimeters) that have fallen so far is still down from the average of 4.76 inches (12 centimeters), said Jose Antonio Estrada, National Weather Service meteorologist.

Forecasters say a cluster of thunderstorms in the Atlantic moving toward the eastern Caribbean has a 50-percent chance of becoming a tropical depression by the end of the

week. It's too early to know how close it might come to Puerto Rico or whether it would generate enough rain.

The executive director of Puerto Rico's water and sewer company, Alberto Lazaro, said large metropolitan areas in and around the capital of San Juan would be put under rationing beginning Aug. 6 if the storm does not drop enough rain. He said hundreds of thousands of customers would get water every other day. But even on days when water would be available under rationing, customers would likely experience interruptions in service, he added.

"It's an extreme alternative, and that's why we were trying to delay it as much as possible," Lazaro said.

The areas covered by the rationing plan depend on two reservoirs — one that is more than 33 feet (10 meters) below the optimum level and another down nearly 10 feet (3 meters). The drought also has hit other parts of the Caribbean.

Jamaica has reported some \$8 million in crop losses in recent months and the government there recently made wasting water a crime and prohibited people from filling up swimming pools and watering lawns.

LATIN BRIEFS

In Venezuela, Ramon Aveledo resigning post

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— The head of Venezuela's opposition alliance has resigned, delivering a blow to anti-government forces bitterly divided over how best to challenge socialist President Nicolas Maduro as frustrations rise in the country over his handling of the struggling economy. University professor Ramon Guillermo Aveledo had held the previously fractious opposition together since the creation five years ago of the Democratic Unity alliance, where he has been executive secretary. Some see Aveledo's resignation as a response to opposition hard-liners who have questioned the coalition's willingness to negotiate with the government. He announced the move Wednesday following a multi-day strategy conference attended by the opposition alliance's top leaders. No replacement has been announced. □

Priest charged for aiding gangs in El Salvador

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP)

— Police arrested a Spanish priest Wednesday on allegations he tried to get favorable treatment for Salvadoran gang members and smuggled contraband into prisons. Roman Catholic priest Antonio Rodriguez Tercero was detained as part of a sweep that also arrested 12 police officers, three court employees and two prosecutor's office officials who allegedly collaborated with members of "Mara" street gangs. Some of them were accused of helping expedite or fix judicial rulings for gang members. National Civil Police Director Mauricio Ramirez Landaverde offered no more details on the charges against Rodriguez Tercero, who is known as "Father Tony" in the low-income neighborhood where his parish is located. □



You had me at Rum Punch!

Daily Sunset Sails and Snorkel Cruise aboard Jolly Pirates

MALMOK - Jolly Pirates, well known for infectious fun during sail and snorkel cruises, has long been a favorite activity among Aruba visitors. Word-of-mouth approval has translated into online praise, and has brought Jolly Pirates and its crew recognition from Trip Advisor which has ranked Jolly Pirates among the top performing establishments from around the world, bestowing on it, its Certificate of Excellence.

Friendly, athletic deckhands will 'wow' you aboard Jolly Pirates Cruises with their hospitality. Once aboard the gleaming teak decks of the twin 85ft teak schooners, Captains Ron, Julio and Edwin will charm you with their interactive hijinks throughout the day. "We literally perform flips in providing our guests the most memorable Sail and Snorkel experience on the island," explains Captain Ron. Daily sunset sails from 5:30 - 7:30pm with open bar have recently been added to the Pirates trajectory, offering an informal evening at sea for only \$32 per person.

Aruba's most popular cruises feature sailing, snorkeling, tasty BBQ with



full-service Open bar and rope-swinging good times. Jolly Pirates cruises embark daily with a bartender who circulates, takes your order, and brings your drinks to you while you relax and enjoy the ride. "You will enjoy their mast-climbing antics followed by an acro-

batic swing into the sea—think Tarzan meets "marine boy." When it's your turn grab hold of the rope and let loose with your best cannonball and remember to grab hold of your swimsuit before you hit the water! Frommer's guide recommends Lucky ladies to

double up with Tarzan-boys for a tandem piggyback swing that would make Jane jealous. "

Jolly Pirates Cruises will Board by the Hadicurari Pier at Moomba Beach between the Holiday Inn and Marriott.

Tear out the value added

coupon featured on the pages of the Aruba Today! Check out www.jolly-pirates.com or give the pirates a shout by calling them at 586-8107 (after hours at 592-7858) for more information on Aruba's most entertaining sea-bound adventure. □



At Okeanos Spa; Therapists Receive Training from Karima Hudson of Sothys

ORANJESTAD - Karima Hudson beauty professional and actual trainer in the USA and region for global beauty brand Sothys visited Okeanos Spa to give an extensive training on vari-

ous treatments. Karima is a professional with more than 20 years of experience in the skin care industry. She is a licensed esthetician and massage therapist with extensive training in

both France and Switzerland. Karima was invited by Okeanos Spa to give training to the local therapists on different techniques like, eye treatment, anti ageing treatment and the popu-

lar Hanakasumi which is a Japanese ritual to rejuvenate and nourish the body. Besides this, there was also introduction of some new Sothys products, namely

Spa Body Elixir of lily & bamboo. Visit Okeanos Spa located in the Renaissance Mall open from 8:00am till 8:00pm. For reservations call 523-6176. □



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Where
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The Caribbean Festival:
Aruba's Carnival experience
every week of the year!

Most visitors don't have the opportunity to experience Aruba's cultural highlight of the year—Carnival (or, as we call it here, Carnaval). But now you can discover the colorful spirit of Aruba's Carnival every Thursday evening at the Caribbean Festival. Situated on the island's southern tip in the heart of San Nicolas where Caribbean and Aruban cultures meet, the Caribbean Festival brings Carnival to life with live Calypso and Soca music, a parade of glittery dancers showcasing many of our past Carnival's gorgeous costumes, festive brass bands, stilt walkers, handi-crafts, and traditional homemade cuisine of the Caribbean region.

We encourage you to spend an evening with the locals, and enjoy a taste of our culture at the Caribbean Festival. It's also a great family or group activity!

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Price : \$64 per person, \$32 children 12 years and under.
Where : Main-Street San Nicolas
When : Thursdays from 6 pm to 10 pm

Information: visit your guest services desk in your hotel
for more information and tickets.

The Caribbean Festival is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, Transportation, Primary Sector and Culture. Operated by the Caribbean Foundation.



Felix Family Honored at the Paradise Beach Villas



EAGLE BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a family of loyal and friendly Visitors of Aruba at the Paradise Beach Villas as Distinguished Visitors and Ambassadors of Goodwill. The symbolic honorary titles are presented in the name of the Min-

ister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10-to-19 and 20-or-more consecutive years.

The honorees were Anthony Felix Sr., and Anthony Felix Jr. and his wife Nancy of Jamesburg, New Jersey. The honorees are loyal members of the Paradise

Beach Villas and they love Aruba very much because of the friendly people, the climate, beaches, restaurants, casinos and being on

Aruba and staying at the Paradise is like being home for them. The certificates were presented by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the

Aruba Tourism Authority together with Mrs. Milca Erasmus representing the Paradise Beach Villas and family members of Mr. Felix. □

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Driftwood Restaurant. This authentic Aruban seafood restaurant is located in characteristic downtown Oranjestad. Their

extended menu has been jubled by many. Driftwood offers daily specials, as well as a delicious 4-course menu for just \$25.95 **Charter deep sea fishing rates:** \$400 - 1/2 day • \$760 - full day. Rates per boat Max. 6 people. **Driftwood Restaurant** Authentic Aruban Seafood Restaurant; Klipstraat #12, Downtown Oranjestad. Tel: (297) 583 2515 www.driftwoodaruba.com Open hours: every day, from 5pm till 10:30pm. Sunday Closed.



Stern sees Sterling saga ending well, lauds Silver

BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Former NBA Commissioner David Stern praised the NBA's handling of the Donald Sterling controversy and predicts it will "end well" for the league.

Stern says his successor, Adam Silver, has been "forceful" but also "demonstrated a compassionate side" in his reaction to the racist remarks that were made by the Los Angeles Clippers owner.

"He's done great. He has been forceful, he has been reflective, he has been buttoned-down and I think he has also demonstrated a compassionate side as well," Stern told The Associated Press on Wednesday during a phone interview. "So I think it's going to end well."

Silver fined Sterling \$2.5 million and banned him for life after the recorded comments became public. Sterling's wife, Shelly, later agreed to sell the team to former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer for a record \$2 billion, a transaction the league believes will close shortly even as Donald Sterling continues trying to fight in court.

Stern retired after 30 years as commissioner in February. He will be enshrined into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame next week.

During his tenure, Shelly and Donald Sterling faced allegations that they discriminated against tenants based on race in Los Angeles according to a lawsuit filed by U.S. Department of Justice in 2006.

Continued on page 22

Going for No.1

McIlroy not one to rest on his laurels



Rory McIlroy, from Northern Ireland, watches his tee shot on the 12th hole during practice for the Bridgestone Invitational golf tournament Wednesday, July 30, 2014, in Akron, Ohio.

Associated Press
Page 18

Rory McIlroy ready to get back to work

DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

AKRON, Ohio (AP) — The claret jug is not out of sight. Rory McIlroy is just trying to get it out of his mind.

McIlroy had plenty of fun with golf's oldest trophy after his win in the British Open. He celebrated with friends in England, took the jug out for a night on the town in Belfast with his buddies, and brought it with him when he returned home to Florida. And yes, it's with him at Firestone this week at the Bridgestone Invitational.

"I've sort of been taking pictures of it beside the TV and on top of the toilet and wherever it's been," he said. "It's definitely nice to have it in my possession." And now it's back to work. McIlroy had two trigger words that helped him at Royal Liverpool — "process" and "spot." They helped him focus on his long game and his putting. He brought out a new word on Tuesday at Firestone — forward.

"I think every time you have success, you need to reassess your goals because it's only halfway, two-thirds



Rory McIlroy, from Northern Ireland, misses his short putt on the 18th green during practice for the Bridgestone Invitational golf tournament Wednesday, July 30, 2014, in Akron, Ohio.

Associated Press

through the season," he said. "And a lot of the goals that I set myself for the start of the year I've achieved

already. So that's when you have to reassess and say, 'OK, you've boxed that off. It's great. Celebrate it for a

couple of days.' But then you've got to move on."

"You've got to keep moving forward and keep thinking about what you want to achieve from now until the end of the year," he said. "And then at the end of the year, you can really reflect on everything you've done and enjoy it." There are plenty of goals right in front of him.

McIlroy has never won a World Golf Championship, and the Bridgestone Invitational offers a great chance. Firestone is a big golf course, typically south, one that requires plenty of power, and McIlroy has that. It was at Firestone two years ago when McIlroy closed with a 68, which he cited as a key to winning the PGA Championship the following week at Kiawah Island.

And then there's next week at Valhalla. As much as McIlroy is looking ahead to Augusta National next April and a chance to win the career Grand Slam, he wouldn't mind getting his fourth major at the PGA Championship.

Also at stake is a chance for the 25-year-old from North-

ern Ireland to return to No. 1 in the world. He would have to win the Bridgestone Invitational, and Adam Scott would have to finish outside the top five.

McIlroy sounded as if he was all business.

He had a few media opportunities after winning The Open, and then headed to London for some fitness testing. After a corporate outing for one of his sponsors, he flew over to Florida and spent the rest of the time practicing for a big stretch ahead of him.

"Just decided I wanted to move on and move forward," he said.

He has a history of moving forward. Two years ago, McIlroy followed his PGA Championship win at Kiawah Island by winning back-to-back tournaments in the FedEx Cup playoffs to wrap up his first PGA Tour money title, and then he won in Dubai at the end of the year to capture the European Tour money title.

"I didn't want to rest on that," he said. "I'd already had a pretty good year, but I wanted to just keep going."

Top 100 in world make U.S. PGA Championship field



Tom Watson of the US plays a shot off the 4th tee during the second day of the British Open Golf championship at the Royal Liverpool golf club, Hoylake, England, Friday July 18, 2014.

Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Kentucky (AP)

— The top 100 men in the world ranking are in the 156-man field for the U.S.

PGA Championship at Valhalla next week.

The field was announced

on Tuesday, and included those who qualified on U.S. PGA Tour money earned in the past 12 months, and

what the event refers to as "special invitations." Translation: Anyone ranked in the top 100 on the world. One of the special invitations went to Kevin Chappell, who is No. 104 in the world.

The highest-ranked player not currently in the U.S. PGA Championship field is Jerry Kelly at No. 109. Kelly is the first alternate and most likely to get in because the U.S. PGA sets aside two spots for winners of the Bridgestone Invitational and Barracuda Championship in Reno, Nevada, if they are not already eligible. Pat Perez is the second alternate.

There were a few mysteries in the special invitations. Stewart Cink received one of the spots, even though

he is No. 149 in the world and was 21 spots behind Kelly in the U.S. PGA points list. Another invitation went to Robert Karlsson of Sweden, who is No. 115 in the world but has been making a rapid climb in the world ranking this year. Karlsson was outside the top 200 just over a month ago.

Of the 41 players who received special invitations, Cink, Chappell and David Hearn of Canada were the only ones who play exclusively on the U.S. PGA Tour. The other two Americans who received invitations are on the Champions Tour — U.S. Ryder Cup captain Tom Watson and Kenny Perry, who grew up in Kentucky and lost in a playoff at Valhalla in the 1996 U.S. PGA Championship.



Miami Marlins starting pitcher Henderson Alvarez throws in the first inning during a baseball game against the Washington Nationals, Tuesday, July 29, 2014, in Miami.

Associated Press

NL Capsules

Alvarez, Marlins beat Nats for 6th straight win

The Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Henderson Alvarez outpitched Stephen Stasburg and surging Miami won its sixth straight.

Giancarlo Stanton drove in two runs as the Marlins won for the ninth time in 10 games and evened their record at 53-53.

Alvarez (8-5) gave up three hits and issued a season-high four walks in seven innings. He escaped a bases-loaded, no-out jam in the second, helped when third baseman Casey McGehee made a diving catch to rob Nate McLouth of extra bases. Steve Cishek loaded the bases in the ninth before striking out Anthony Rendon to record his 27th save in 30 chances. Strasburg (7-9) allowed one run and four hits in seven innings.

PHILLIES 6, METS 0

NEW YORK (AP) — Cole Hamels pitched eight shutout innings and finally got some run sup-

port when Chase Utley hit a grand slam to lead Philadelphia.

Hamels (6-5) has won three straight starts for the first time in almost two years. He retired the final 13 batters to lower his ERA to 2.55. In his last three outings, he has 27 strikeouts and one walk. For a while, it looked as though this one might end like his last two, 2-1 wins over the Braves and Giants. But with the Phillies up 2-0 and two outs in the seventh, Mets starter Dillon Gee (4-4) suddenly lost his control. Gee left with the bases loaded and Josh Edgin came on for a lefty-lefty matchup. Utley drilled a 2-2 pitch into the upper deck in right field for his fifth career grand slam and first since 2010.

REDS 3, DIAMONDBACKS 0

CINCINNATI (AP) — Mike Leake pitched into the eighth inning and singled home a run for Cincinnati.

The Reds won for only the second time in 11 games since the All-Star break. The offense has been the biggest problem, scoring only 20 runs — by far the fewest in the majors over that span.

Leake (8-9) had a single off the glove of diving third baseman Martin Prado that drove in a run in the second off Trevor Cahill (1-8), who has yet to win as a starter this season. Todd Frazier and Brayan Pena had RBI singles off Cahill, who fell to 0-6 in seven starts this season.

Aroldis Chapman pitched the ninth for 23rd save. He extended his streak of at least one strikeout in 45 consecutive appearances, a major league record for a reliever. □

Player gets nearly \$1M in Offerman bat attack case

BRIDGEPORT, Connecticut (AP) — A lawyer says a Connecticut minor league baseball player hit by former major leaguer Jose Offerman in a 2007 baseball bat attack has won nearly \$1 million in a lawsuit.

A jury Tuesday awarded \$940,000 to Bridgeport Bluefish catcher Johnathan Nathans, who wanted \$4.8 million. Nathans' lawyer Josh Koskoff says

he's still affected by a head injury he suffered in the attack.

Offerman's lawyer Frank Riccio II says the jury found Offerman committed an assault but not battery. He says he may challenge the award.

Offerman testified he didn't swing his bat at Nathans and another player during the game in Bridgeport. He was playing for



In this Aug. 14, 2007, file photo, Bridgeport Bluefish catcher John Nathans, right, tries to prevent Long Island Duck's Jose Offerman (18) from hitting Bluefish pitcher Matt Beech with a bat during a fight in the first inning of an Atlantic League minor league baseball game in Bridgeport, Conn.

Associated Press

the Long Island Ducks in a major league comeback bid.

Offerman played for the

Boston Red Sox, Los Angeles Dodgers and other teams during a 15-year career that ended in 2005. □

Machado homer in 12th gives O's win over Angels

The Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Manny Machado homered off Cory Rasmus leading off the 12th inning to give the Baltimore Orioles a 7-6 victory over the Los Angeles Angels on Tuesday.

Machado hit a 1-2 breaking ball from Rasmus (2-1) into the seats in left field to end the back-and-forth duel between AL contenders.

Ryan Webb (3-1) worked out of a two-on, two-out jam in the top of the 12th for the Orioles, who improved to 12-3 in extra innings.

Adam Jones and Nick Markakis homered for Baltimore, playing its first home game since the All-Star break.

Josh Hamilton homered and had three RBIs for the Angels, who have dropped eight of their last 11 against the Orioles.

A potential pitching duel between Jered Weaver and Chris Tillman turned into a slugfest, as both former All-Stars left after the fifth inning with Baltimore leading 6-5.

YANKEES 12, RANGERS 11

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Brett Gardner had four hits to go with a tremendous sliding catch and New York overcame J.P. Arencibia's seven RBIs for Texas.

Gardner had a leadoff homer and two doubles, and he reached base twice in a seven-run sixth that put the Yankees ahead to stay.

He started the inning with a double and scored on Carlos Beltran's two run-single, then reached on a three-base error that deflected off two outfielders and sent home the rally's final run.

Brandon McCarthy (3-0) gave up four runs and nine hits in six innings for the Yankees.

Arencibia homered twice, including a grand slam. He also had two doubles to be the first Rangers player with four extra-base hits since Josh Hamilton's four-homer game at Baltimore on May 8, 2012. The last player with at least seven RBIs in a loss was Jonathan Lucroy in 2012, when Milwaukee fell



Los Angeles Angels relief pitcher Cory Rasmus walks off the field after Baltimore Orioles' Manny Machado hit a game-winning solo home run in the 12th inning of a baseball game, Tuesday, July 29, 2014, in Baltimore. Baltimore won 7-6.

Associated Press

to the Cubs, STATS said.

Nick Martinez (1-7) allowed six runs and six hits in 5 2-3 innings.

ATHLETICS 7, ASTROS 4

HOUSTON (AP) — Slumping Brandon Moss hit a go-ahead single during a six-run rally in the ninth inning to lift Oakland past Houston. Josh Reddick homered for the AL West-leading A's and Yoenis Cespedes had three hits, including two doubles.

Oakland trailed 4-1 in the ninth before pinch-hitter Alberto Callaspo had a two-run single off closer Chad Qualls (1-2).

After Houston couldn't turn a potential game-ending double play on John Jaso's grounder, Jed Lowrie walked and Cespedes tied it with a single.

Moss ended an 0-for-14 rut with an RBI single off Tony Sipp and then Josh Donaldson hit a two-run double off Jose Veras.

Evan Scribner (1-0) got the win and Sean Doolittle pitched the ninth for his 16th save.

TWINS 2, ROYALS 1

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Kyle Gibson bounced back for a rocky start to shut

down Kansas City, and Minnesota held on through a shaky ninth to beat James Shields and the Royals.

Gibson (9-8) allowed only a single by Alcides Escobar in the third inning and another by Nori Aoki in the sixth over seven dazzling innings. He was at his best toward the end, too, setting down the Royals in order in the seventh on four seemingly effortless pitches.

Casey Fien worked the eighth before Glen Perkins ran into trouble in the ninth, giving up a leadoff double to Omar Infante and an RBI single to Eric Hosmer. Perkins bounced back to get three straight pop outs and record his 26th save of the season.

Josh Willingham hit a sacrifice fly in the third inning and Brian Dozier provided a run-scoring single in the fifth off Shields (9-6).

WHITE SOX 11, TIGERS 4

DETROIT (AP) — Jose Abreu and Adam Dunn hit consecutive home runs during a seven-run seventh inning that sent Chicago past Detroit.

The White Sox sent 12 hitters to the plate in the seventh and broke the game open

against Anibal Sanchez (7-5) and Joakim Soria. Alexei Ramirez added a three-run double in the inning.

Jose Quintana (6-7) allowed two runs and nine hits in six innings.

Detroit made three errors, including two in that seventh inning. Soria made his first home appearance since the Tigers acquired him in a trade with Texas. He retired only one of the seven hitters he faced and allowed his first two homers of the season.

Abreu hit his major league-leading 31st homer of the year. He finished with three hits, extending his hitting streak to 18 games.

MARINERS 5, INDIANS 2

CLEVELAND (AP) — Hisashi Iwakuma kept his road record spotless since last July, pitching seven strong innings to lead Seattle.

Iwakuma (9-5) improved to 9-0 in his last 14 road starts, the second-longest such streak in club history. He is 5-0 outside Seattle this season.

Dustin Ackley hit a two-run double in Seattle's four-run fourth against Trevor Bauer (4-6). Mike Zunino homered in the fifth for the Mariners,

one of six teams scrapping for the AL's second wild-card spot.

The Indians are 5-7 since the All-Star break and are trying to decide whether to be active before Thursday's trade deadline.

BLUE JAYS 4, RED SOX 2

BOSTON (AP) — Marcus Stroman had his second solid start against Boston in five days and Colby Rasmus hit a solo homer to lead Toronto.

Anthony Gose had a tie-breaking two-run double for the Blue Jays, who won for the ninth time in 11 games and improved to 9-3 against the Red Sox this season.

Xander Bogaerts homered and Dustin Pedroia added an RBI double for Boston, which has dropped all five games in Fenway Park against Toronto.

The Red Sox lost for the seventh time in eight games.

Stroman (7-2) held Boston to one run and six hits in seven innings, striking out eight and walking two. He took a no-hitter into the seventh last Thursday before giving up Shane Victorino's leadoff single for his only hit allowed in seven innings.

Rubby De La Rosa (3-4) gave up three runs on nine hits in six innings.

RAYS 5, BREWERS 1

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Alex Cobb struck out 12 in eight innings and Ben Zobrist drove in two runs to help Tampa Bay get its 11th win in 12 games.

Zobrist hit his ninth home run in the sixth inning for the only run off Milwaukee starter Matt Garza. Zobrist's double in the eighth off reliever Will Smith (1-3) put the Rays ahead for the first time. Pinch-hitter Logan Forsythe followed with another RBI double and the Rays went on to a four-run inning.

Cobb (7-6) gave up three hits and two walks in winning his third straight start. The right-hander is 5-0 in his last six starts.

Garza gave up five hits and two walks in seven innings, striking out two.

The Brewers have lost four of five. □



In this July 1, 2014 file photo, Rafael Nadal of Spain plays a return to Nick Kyrgios of Australia during their men's singles match at the All England Lawn Tennis Championships in Wimbledon, London. Associated Press

HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

Rafael Nadal withdrew Wednesday from U.S. Open tuneups in Toronto and Cincinnati because of

a right wrist injury, putting in doubt his status for a title defense at the year's last Grand Slam tournament. The second-ranked Nadal plays left-handed, but he

Nadal out of 2 tournaments because of right wrist

uses a two-handed backhand. He said in a statement issued by the Toronto tournament that he injured himself Tuesday.

In a posting on Facebook, Nadal said he is "disappointed" that he can't play the next two weeks but adds, "I expect to be well for the U.S. Open."

Nadal's manager, Benito Perez-Barbadillo, wrote in an emailed release that the Spaniard was hurt in practice on his home island of Mallorca while getting ready for the North American hard-court circuit.

Perez-Barbadillo said that doctors determined Wednesday that Nadal will need to wear a cast on his wrist for two to three weeks and the initial prognosis is

for him to be able to return to action at the U.S. Open, which begins Aug. 25. But doctors will keep tabs on the injury, including with MRI exams, and then decide when Nadal can play again. The Toronto tournament begins Monday, and the Cincinnati tournament starts Aug. 11. Nadal won both of those events last year (when the Canadian tournament was held in Montreal). They would have represented his hard-court preparation for this year's U.S. Open. Nadal won his second championship at Flushing Meadows in 2013. That is part of his collection of 14 Grand Slam titles, tied with Pete Sampras for second in the history of men's tennis,

trailing only Roger Federer's record of 17.

Nadal is 44-8 with four titles in 2014, including his record ninth French Open trophy. He hasn't competed since losing in the fourth round of Wimbledon to 19-year-old Nick Kyrgios in four sets on July 1.

Nadal has reached the final in his last three appearances at the U.S. Open, beating Novak Djokovic to win the titles in 2010 and last year, and losing to Djokovic in 2011. Nadal missed the tournament in 2012, part of an extended absence because of a knee injury.

He missed a chance to defend his 2008 Wimbledon championship in 2009, because of knee problems. □

Citi Open Top seed Safarova loses in first round

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top-seeded Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic and two-time defending champion Magdalena Rybarikova of Slovakia were bundled out of the Citi Open in the first round on Tuesday.

Kristina Mladenovic of France, a semifinalist and quarterfinalist on tour in the last two weeks, came back for a 2-6, 6-3, 6-3 victory against the Wimbledon semifinalist.

No. 2-seeded Ekaterina Makarova of Russia cruised to a 6-1, 6-1 victory against Rybarikova, who had won her last 10 matches in the tournament.

On the men's side, 2004 champion Lleyton Hewitt defeated fellow Australian Marinko Matosevic 6-4, 6-3 to advance to the third round. Also through were seventh-seeded Kevin Anderson of South Africa and Denis Istomin of Uzbekistan. Christina McHale upset fourth-seeded Sloane Stephens 6-4, 4-6, 6-0 in an all-American opening-round match on a side court that drew a standing-room-only crowd to go along with



Lleyton Hewitt, of Australia, returns the ball against Marinko Matosevic, of Australia, during a match at the Citi Open tennis tournament, Tuesday, July 29, 2014, in Washington. Associated Press

fans lined up outside a perimeter fence.

It was their first meeting on the tour, although there was a level of familiarity.

McHale will play another American, Vania King, in the second round.

"I don't think Sloane played her best in the third set so I just stayed focused," McHale said.

No. 5 seed Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia also advanced. □

Ivanovic beats Lisicki, Cibulkova out at Stanford



Venus Williams returns to Paula Kania in the Bank of the West Classic, Tuesday, July 29, 2014, in Stanford, Calif. Associated Press

RICK EYMER Associated Press STANFORD, California (AP)

— Sabine Lisicki hit the fastest record serve on the WTA tour but it wasn't enough against Ana Ivanovic in the first round of the Bank of the West Classic, while defending champion Dominika Cibulkova also lost on Tuesday.

The fifth-seeded Ivanovic won 7-6 (2), 6-1, partially avenging her loss to the German in the previous meeting at Wimbledon.

Experienced duo Venus Williams and Daniela Hantuchova also won. Cibulkova was beaten 6-2, 4-6, 6-2 by Garbine Muguruza

of Spain.

Lisicki blasted a serve of 131 mph (211 kph) at 5-5. It wasn't an ace because Ivanovic got her racket on the ball but couldn't return it. The serve eclipsed Venus Williams' record of 129 mph (208 kph) in 2007.

Ivanovic took full advantage of Lisicki's weak second serve, winning 16 of 23 points, and though she had 10 break points against her, the Serb saved eight of them, while Lisicki was broken four times from just five opportunities.

"Sometimes just a few points make a difference and it helps to be positive in a tight situation," Iva-

novic said. "I did that today in the tiebreak."

Ivanovic is playing her first tournament since hiring Dejan Petrovic as coach, replacing Nemanja Kontic. "It was a lot of things on and off the court," Ivanovic said of her split with Kontic following the loss to Lisicki at Wimbledon. "He helped me a lot, and sometimes these decisions are very hard." The Serbian next faces Canadian qualifier Carol Zhao, who was leading Yanina Wickmayer, 6-2, 1-0, when the Belgian retired because of a viral infection. Muguruza played pressure-free tennis to down sixth-seeded Cibulkova, with the tall Spaniard using her strong serve to good effect.

"When I play someone higher in the rankings I don't feel pressure," the 28th-ranked Muguruza said. "This is a really fast court and that's good for my game."

Williams beat Polish qualifier Paula Kania 6-3, 6-2, and next plays fourth-seeded Victoria Azarenka, whom she has beaten in three previous meetings.

Hantuchova downed Argentina's Paula Ormaechea 6-3, 6-4 and will face Muguruza in the next round. □

Even on bad teams, Williams good enough for Hall

By **BOB BAUM**
AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) -- Aeneas Williams spent most of his NFL career on bad teams. But that didn't prevent him from pursuing excellence, becoming one of the best cornerbacks in the league and earning a spot in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. In his 10 seasons with Arizona, the Cardinals had one winning season. But despite that, he either led or shared the NFL lead in interceptions three times and made six Pro Bowls. Williams never missed a game and started all but one. He had a streak of 157 consecutive starts.

And he never let the poor play around him affect his performance.

"Just refuse to become a loser even though we weren't winning a whole lot of games," Williams said.

He finally made it to the playoffs with the Cardinals in 1998, then intercepted two passes as Arizona stunned the Cowboys in Dallas in the first round.

"I really saw the makings of what the current (Cardinals) organization is experiencing now," Williams said. But the Cardinals slipped back into their inept ways



In this Dec. 9, 2001, file photo, St. Louis Rams' Aeneas Williams celebrating after breaking up a pass in the third quarter against the San Francisco 49ers, in St. Louis. Aeneas Williams spent most of his pro career on bad teams.

Associated Press

and, after a decade in the desert, Williams left to join a winner.

On draft day of 2001, the Cardinals traded him to the St. Louis Rams for draft picks.

That year, for just the second time in his career, Williams was in the playoffs.

He started at left cornerback, helping transform a

woeful Rams defense, and St. Louis reached the Super Bowl, where it lost to Tom Brady and the New England Patriots 20-17.

Williams was moved to safety in the final years of his career, retiring in 2004, leaving a trail of admiration.

"Everything he did, whether it was on or off the field,

he did with a tremendous amount of honesty and dignity," said Dave McGinnis, who coached Williams in Arizona.

Williams had 55 interceptions, including eight seasons with at least four. He made the Hall of Fame in his third time as a finalist.

Now a pastor in St. Louis, Williams will be introduced at the Hall of Fame induction by his father, Lawrence, whom he credits for molding him into the man he became. "I didn't have to look outside my home for a hero," Williams said.

Growing up in a strict but loving family in New Orleans, Williams said school was more important to his parents than athletics.

He played football in high school, but didn't draw any interest from colleges. So he followed his older brother to Southern University.

As a junior, he decided to join the football team as a walk-on. The following season, he led the Southwestern Athletic Conference with seven interceptions.

Williams still remembers, and often repeats, what Southern defensive coordinator Percy Duhe told the New Orleans newspaper, that "Aeneas is a good

player, but I don't think he'll ever go pro because he runs a 4.6 (second) 40-yard dash."

Williams said he joined the track team that year and worked with a fellow football player to improve his speed. "I ran a 4.28 for scouts that spring," he said. The then-Phoenix Cardinals picked him in the third round.

While the team lost year after year, Williams said he bears no animosity.

Quite the opposite.

"I can say my time in Arizona was fulfilling, rewarding," he said. "I'd never trade it for the world."

McGinnis, who was the defensive coordinator, then head coach, at Arizona, said every game plan would be developed around Williams.

"I pulled him aside one day and told him 'Having you play corner reminds me of having Mike Singletary at linebacker,'" McGinnis said.

Williams and Singletary are two of six Hall of Famers McGinnis has coached.

"The one common thread that they all possessed is they elevated the play of everybody around them," McGinnis said. "They had a different presence."

Williams said he was overwhelmed by the congratulations he received from former teammates and others who had been part of his football life.

"I never wanted to just be a great player on the field," he said. "I wanted people to experience joy off the field as well."

He carries with him a congratulatory note he got from Jay Zigmunt, former Rams president of football operations.

Williams read it aloud, his voice cracking a bit with emotion.

Zigmunt started by saying he had been associated with many great players in his 27 years with the Rams.

"You're at the top of that list with your incredible play," Williams read. "But your exemplary life as a man even surpasses your performance and accomplishments on the field."

Stern

Continued from page 17

The Sterlings, who at the time owned and managed about 119 apartment buildings or 5,000 apartments throughout Los Angeles County, agreed to settle the suit for \$2.725 million. Stern has remained an adviser to the league and remained in frequent contact with Silver, who worked under him since 1992. Silver was the commissioner for less than three months when TMZ released audio of Sterling's remarks. Silver handed out his punishment days later and has navigated the league as it tries to oust Sterling, who owned the Clippers franchise even before Stern became commissioner.

"Adam has been a part of the fabric of every impor-

tant decision and event for the last 22 years," Stern said. "He knows exactly what to do, he's done mostly everything, and he's continuing his run as being a terrific manager." Sterling still has lawsuits against Silver and the league, though his best attempt to block the sale may have slipped away when a Los Angeles judge ruled Monday that Shelly Sterling had the authority to sell the team.

That's a relief to players, some of whom have said they wouldn't want to play if Sterling is still in the league. New Players Association executive director Michele Roberts said the response to Sterling would likely be on the list of things she would discuss with the players, whose president, Chris Paul, plays for the Clippers. Interim CEO Dick



In this Thursday, Oct. 10, 2013 file photo, outgoing NBA Commissioner David Stern answers questions from reporters at a news conference prior to the start of the pre-season game between the Houston Rockets and Indiana Pacers at the Mall of Asia Arena at suburban Pasay city, south of Manila, Philippines.

Associated Press

Parsons testified that coach Doc Rivers said he would not return if Sterling did.

"Coach Rivers and Chris Paul and those guys made their statement in what they would do if he was back as

an owner. It's very tough to play for someone like that, that came out with a statement," said Washington Wizards guard John Wall, who is trying to make the U.S. national team.

Microsoft spreads Cortana abroad in Windows Phone

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Microsoft is spreading its Cortana digital assistant abroad, starting with China and the U.K.

The company's corporate vice president of operating systems, Joe Belfiore, said Wednesday in Beijing that Chinese and British users of Windows Phones will get the voice-recognizing app in an update to Windows Phone 8.1 that will begin rolling out to developers next week and to users in the coming months.

In China, the app nicknamed "Xiao Na," will speak Mandarin and include locally relevant information, like air quality reports in weather updates and information on local TV shows and celebrities.

In Britain, users will get an app that has a British accent and be up to date about English Premier League soccer and other local matters.

Users in Australia, Canada and India will also be allowed to use a version of

Cortana, although the Redmond, Washington-based company said that would be an earlier test mode and tailored to U.S. and U.K. audiences.

The update, described in April at Microsoft Corp.'s developer conference, will also introduce new hardware capabilities as the software giant seeks hardware partners beyond Nokia, whose device unit it purchased in April. Although Nokia has accounted for most of the Windows Phone shipments today, Microsoft has signed up 14 new manufacturing partners in the last six months, including heavyweights like Samsung, HTC, Huawei and ZTE.

The update allows for phones to use two SIM cards, supports a better screen resolution for lower-end phones and adds support for so-called "smart covers" that give users brief notifications through a small window in the cover like on Samsung's S4 and S5. Ad-



In this April 2, 2014 file photo, Microsoft corporate vice president Joe Belfiore, of the Operating Systems Group, demonstrates the new Cortana personal assistant during the keynote address of the Build Conference in San Francisco.

Associated Press

ditionally, the update adds support for faster charging and improves support for Bluetooth accessories like fitness tracker wristbands. On the software side, the update will now allow so-

called "live tile" icons to be grouped into folders, a functionality that has long been available on Apple iPhones and devices that run Google Inc.'s Android operating system.

In Windows Phone, however, the tiles show snippets of information from the apps.

The folders will show snippets from four to 18 apps in the folder at once.

Britain to test driverless cars next year



The interior of a driverless car during testing at the headquarters of motor industry research organization MIRA at Nuneaton in the West Midlands, England, Wednesday, July 30, 2014.

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British officials says driverless cars will be tested on roads in as many as three cities in a trial program to begin in January.

Officials said Wednesday the tests will last up to three years. Sensors and cameras will guide the cars.

The plan will include two types of driverless technology.

One places a driver in the

car who can take the controls if needed; another calls for a fully autonomous vehicle with no driver present.

Transport Minister Claire Perry said driverless cars could transform Britain's road network and improve safety and traffic flow while reducing carbon emissions. The cities to test the system will be chosen in a competition.

What's a group selfie? Usie (pronounced uss-ee)



This March 2, 2014 file photo shows Kevin Spacey, from left, Angelina Jolie, Julia Roberts, Brad Pitt, Jennifer Lawrence, Ellen DeGeneres and Jared Leto join other celebrities for a group selfie during the Oscars at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

BETH J. HARPAZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — What do you call a group selfie? An usie, of course!

As in "us." Pronounced uss-ee, rhymes with fussy.

"Usies are a growing trend that I think have far more social value than selfies,"

said Michal Ann Strahilevitz, a professor of marketing at Golden Gate University in San Francisco who studies consumer behavior. "It's magical capturing moments we share with other people."

In contrast to one-person selfies, usies are "more

about the relationship, and less about you and your hair," she said.

The word — sometimes spelled usie, sometimes ussie — has been showing up in written material since at least April 2013, according to Ben Zimmer, executive producer of Vocabulary.com and language columnist for The Wall Street Journal. A Business Insider story from January noted that the outstretched arm of the photo-taker in usies is a "signature" of the image, because the shooter has to get the camera far enough away to get the group in the frame. The Times of India in March said Pope Francis' group selfie with visitors at the Vatican last year "could possibly be the first chronicled celebrity usie." And a PopStopTV.com report from June was headlined: "Selfies Are Dead, Usie is the Latest Trend!"

Wall Street ends flat as Fed fails to surprise

MATTHEW CRAFT
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A cheerful report on the U.S. economy, rising profits and no surprises from the Federal

Reserve left the stock market nearly where it started on Wednesday. The news was nearly all good. The government said that the economy grew at a robust 4 percent annual rate this spring. Later in the day, the Federal Reserve did exactly what investors expected. It scaled back its support for the economy, while pledging to keep short term interest rates low "for a considerable time" after it stops buying bonds.

Traders sold U.S. government bonds, pushing the 2-year Treasury note to 0.56 percent, the highest level this year. It's a clear sign bond traders think an

cause people are wondering when the party will come to an end." The Standard & Poor's 500 index ended with a gain of 0.12 of a point, or 0.01 per-

Fed's bond purchases will end in October. Most economists expect that the Fed could start raising rates next year as the economy improves. A strong report on the economy is always good news for the stock market over the long haul, said Darrell Cronk, Deputy Chief Investment Officer for Wells Fargo Wealth Management. In the near term, though, investors are bound weigh any good news against a possible interest-rate move from the Federal Reserve.

"I'd love to get back to where what matters most for the market is the economy not what the latest read is on the Fed," Cronk said. Investors were also following the parade of big companies turning in their second-quarter results. The reports out Wednesday presented a mixed picture. Sliding sales for Goodyear Tire & Rubber knocked its stock down \$2.14, or 8 percent, to \$25.45. Twitter's stronger revenue sent its stock up 20 percent Wednesday.

The company reported a quarterly loss late Tuesday but its revenue more than doubled over the year, thanks to new advertising tools and a surge in traffic from soccer fans following the World Cup. Twitter's stock surged \$7.71 to \$46.30. □



Trader Fred DeMarco works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. A cheerful report on the U.S. economy, rising profits and no surprises from the Federal Reserve left the stock market nearly where it started on Wednesday.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

improving economy will force the Fed to raise interest rates sooner rather than later. Meanwhile, stock investors were mainly sitting on their hands.

"Good news is getting to be bad news again," said Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at BMO Private Bank, referring to the lack of enthusiasm among investors in the stock market. "The G.D.P. report is obviously good news, so why are stocks off? Be-

cent, at 1,970.07. The Dow Jones industrial average slipped 31.75 points, or 0.2 percent, to close at 16,880.36. The Nasdaq composite rose 20.20 points, or 0.5 percent, to 4,462.90.

The Fed announced plans to make further cuts to its monthly bond purchases, a program launched after the financial crisis to encourage borrowing and spending. At the current pace of cutbacks, the

investment banking division, describing it as in line with efforts to streamline the unit. Though Jenkins has cut some 7,000 jobs in the division, he has raised the ire of investors by paying bigger bonuses.

The Bank of England's banking oversight unit and the Financial Conduct Authority also announced they would consult on further measures to improve accountability in the banking sector, including rules that would require senior leaders to pass annual tests to show they are qualified to hold their jobs. □

Barclays chief applauds claw-back idea on bonuses

DANICA KIRKA
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The CEO of Barclays said having provisions to claw back bankers' bonuses, as outlined by regulators on Wednesday, is a good idea in principle. The Bank of England published new rules Wednesday to punish executives who misbehave. They include introducing a seven-year period from the date of the award in which the bonus can be retracted. Antony Jenkins told the BBC that such provisions are useful, though he was awaiting the details. The debate on banker's

bonuses has become heated in Europe since the onset of the 2008 financial crisis. Critics blame the pursuit of astronomical bonus sums for fueling the risk-taking behavior that triggered the troubles. Jenkins has made corporate responsibility a key pillar of his tenure at Barclays, Britain's second-biggest bank.

The lender has been shaken by scandal and was fined by regulators in the U.S. and Britain for manipulating the London interbank offered rate, or LIBOR, a benchmark for trillions of dollars in loans.

"I would say that in principle I support the idea that where there is wrongdoing there should be appropriate punishment," he said "If that's criminal wrongdoing that should be criminal, if it's recklessness that should be punished also. I'm not against the concept of clawback."

Barclays reported that adjusted net income fell 14 percent to 1.76 billion pounds (\$2.9 billion) in the second quarter. Jenkins blamed foreign exchange movements for distorting results.

Jenkins dismissed a 67 percent drop in profits for the

investment banking division, describing it as in line with efforts to streamline the unit.

Though Jenkins has cut some 7,000 jobs in the division, he has raised the ire of investors by paying bigger bonuses.

The Bank of England's banking oversight unit and the Financial Conduct Authority also announced they would consult on further measures to improve accountability in the banking sector, including rules that would require senior leaders to pass annual tests to show they are qualified to hold their jobs. □

STREET BRIEFS Italy's Fiat 2Q profits tumble by 55 percent

MILAN (AP) — Italian car-maker Fiat SpA, which controls Chrysler, says its second-quarter profits dropped by more than a half due to lower performance in North and Latin America. Fiat said Wednesday that net profit was 197 million euros (\$263 million), compared with 435 million euros in the same period last year. North American volumes were up 10 percent, driven by incentives to sell legacy Chrysler vehicles, but the incentives also cut into profits. Earnings before interest and tax in the region dropped 18 percent to 598 million euros. In Latin America, revenues dropped 13 percent as vehicle shipments fell 21 percent. Fiat said revenues in the quarter rose to 23.3 billion euros, up 1 billion euros over the same quarter last year. Fiat is currently finalizing its merger with Chrysler. □

No2 Irish bank profitable for 1st time since 2008

DUBLIN (AP) — Ireland's second-largest bank, Allied Irish Banks, has returned to profit for the first time since a 2008 property crash pushed the nation to the brink of bankruptcy. Finance Minister Michael Noonan said Wednesday's first-half results exceeded expectations and made it more likely that the government could sell its stake in the nationalized bank at a profit. Ireland pumped 20 billion euros (\$26 billion) into Allied Irish to keep it afloat from 2009 onward, eventually acquiring 99.8 percent of its shares. The government values Allied Irish at 11.5 billion euros (\$15.4 billion) and hopes to begin selling its stake next year. □

Nintendo Co. reports loss on shaky Wii U sales

YURI KAGEYAMA
AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Nintendo Co. sank to a worse-than-expected loss for the fiscal first quarter on lagging Wii U and 3DS video-game machine sales. But the Japanese company behind Super Mario and Pokemon games stuck to its annual forecasts

Wednesday for a 20 billion yen (\$196 million) profit on 590 billion yen (\$5.8 billion) sales.

Kyoto-based Nintendo reported a 9.92 billion yen (\$97.3 million) April-June loss compared with an 8.62 billion yen profit a year earlier. Quarterly sales totaled 74.695 billion yen (\$732.3 million), down 8 percent

from a year earlier.

Nintendo has been fighting to maintain profits amid competition from games and social media apps on smartphones and other mobile devices. The company also faces competition from rivals Sony Corp. and Microsoft Corp., which are aggressively pushing their game machines with

holiday shoppers.

Nintendo has also faced questions about the health of its president, Satoru Iwata, after he was a no-show at the E3 video-game event in Los Angeles last month. Last month, in a letter online to shareholders, he said he would miss the annual shareholders' meeting as well and said

for the first time that he had surgery for a bile-duct "growth," found during a routine health checkup.

"I have already resumed my business by email and by other means, but it is anticipated that a little more time is needed for me to return to my regular work schedule," Iwata said in the letter. □

WellPoint 2Q tops Wall Street expectations

MICHELLE CHAPMAN
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — WellPoint's second-quarter profit fell 8.6 percent as expenses tied to changes in the nation's health care laws climbed. It still beat Wall Street expectations, and the nation's second-biggest health insurer raised its profit expectations for the year. Its shares fell in morning trading after initially rising.

For the three months ended June 30, WellPoint's net income declined to \$731.1 million, or \$2.56 per share, from \$800.1 million, or \$2.64 per share, in the same quarter a year earlier.

Earnings, adjusted for investment gains, came to \$2.44 per share. That easily topped the \$2.28 that analysts were projecting, according to a poll by Zacks Investment Research.

Total expenses increased to \$17.21 billion from \$16.48 billion. The company's selling, general and adminis-

trative expense ratio was 15.8 percent, an increase of 190 basis points compared with the same period last year.

While the country's health care overhaul gave insurers more customers through a coverage expansion that started this year, it also heaped additional costs on their balance sheets, including an industry-wide tax that is non-deductible. It also trims funding for Medicare Advantage plans, changes how insurers can write their coverage and adds an industry-wide tax, which is not deductible.

WellPoint said that its second-quarter operating revenue, which excludes investment gains or losses, rose 4.2 percent to \$18.23 billion from \$17.49 billion. That is slightly above the \$18.22 billion Wall Street forecast.

The health insurer cited the same changes to health care laws for driving revenue higher, largely through

premium increases. Rising Medicaid enrollment helped push revenue higher as well.

Medical enrollment grew to about 37.3 million mem-

bers in the quarter, up 4.5 percent from 35.7 million a year ago. WellPoint made its name nationally as a provider of private Blue Cross Blue

Shield coverage, but it is pegging more of its future growth on government business, which includes the Medicaid and Medicare programs and

members in the period, bolstered by strong Medicaid growth. WellPoint added 325,000 Medicaid members in the quarter.

On Wednesday, President



This photo shows the corporate headquarters of Wellpoint in Indianapolis. Wellpoint reported quarterly financial results on Wednesday, July 30, 2014. (AP Photo/Michael Conroy)

bers in the quarter, up 4.5 percent from 35.7 million a year ago.

WellPoint made its name nationally as a provider of private Blue Cross Blue

coverage for government employees. The government business — which made up 45 percent of the quarter's operating revenue — added 326,000

and CEO Joseph Swedish said he is optimistic about WellPoint's future growth opportunities in its commercial and government segments. □

Toyota remains at top in sales after first half

YURI KAGEYAMA
AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Toyota remains No. 1 in global vehicles sales after the first six months of this year, followed by Volkswagen which bumped General Motors out of second place as the U.S. automaker grapples with a recall scandal.

Japan's Toyota Motor Corp. announced Wednesday that January-June global sales totaled 5.097 million vehicles, up nearly 4 percent from a year earlier. Sales grew in

its home Japanese market as well in the rest of Asia, U.S. and Europe.

Sales in Japan were strong because of a rush to beat the rise in the consumption tax that kicked in from April 1, according to Toyota.

Toyota's vehicle sales soared 12 percent in China, while they also held up in North America, growing 5 percent. Toyota also did well in Europe, with sales edging up 8 percent.

Toyota declined comment on being No. 1. Toyota officials say they are merely trying to satisfy customers,

one car at a time, and not competing to be at the top.

All auto officials tend to make such comments in public, but there is no question of the intense competition.

Volkswagen of Germany sold 4.97 million vehicles in the first half, outpacing General Motors Co. at 4.92 million vehicles, according to figures released earlier this month. VW's sales are growing faster than that of Detroit-based GM, which is grappling with a major recall over faulty ignition

switches.

Toyota, which makes the Camry sedan, Prius hybrid and Lexus luxury models, finished at the top last year with a record 9.98 million vehicles. GM was second and VW third.

Toyota expects to sell more than 10 million vehicles this year, a milestone in the industry.

GM had been the top-selling automaker for more than seven decades before losing the title to Toyota in 2008. GM retook the sales crown in 2011, when Toyota's production was

hurt by the quake and tsunami in northeastern Japan.

Toyota made a powerful comeback in 2012, and appears on track to retain its title this year.

The battle among the three automakers remains tight, fought out in still largely untested territory in new markets.

Toyota is a relative late-comer in China, for instance, whereas GM and VW are longtime powerhouses there. Toyota, however, is rapidly catching up. □

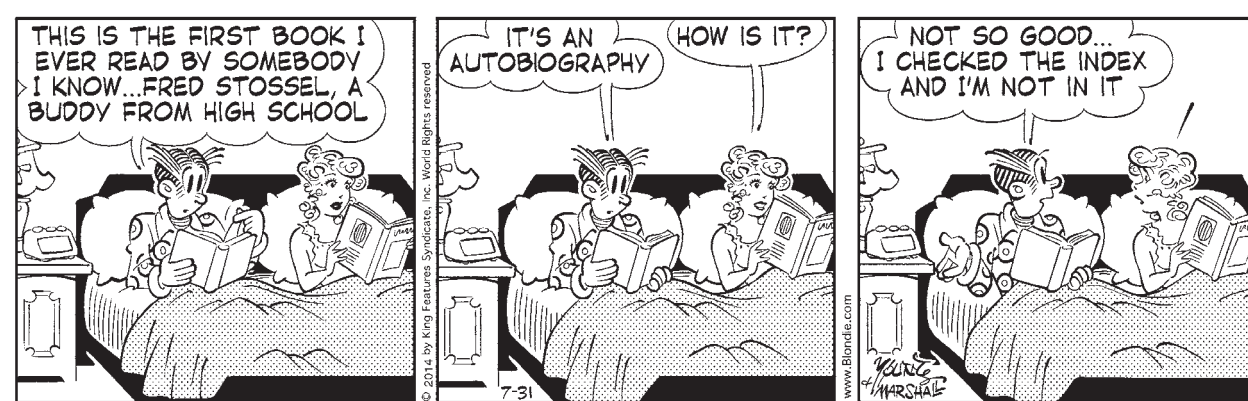
Mutts



6 Chix



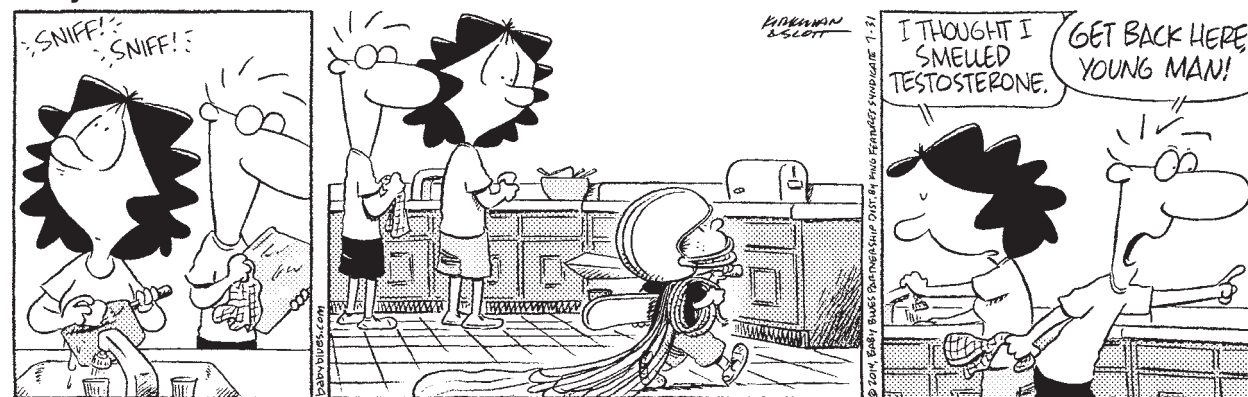
Blondie



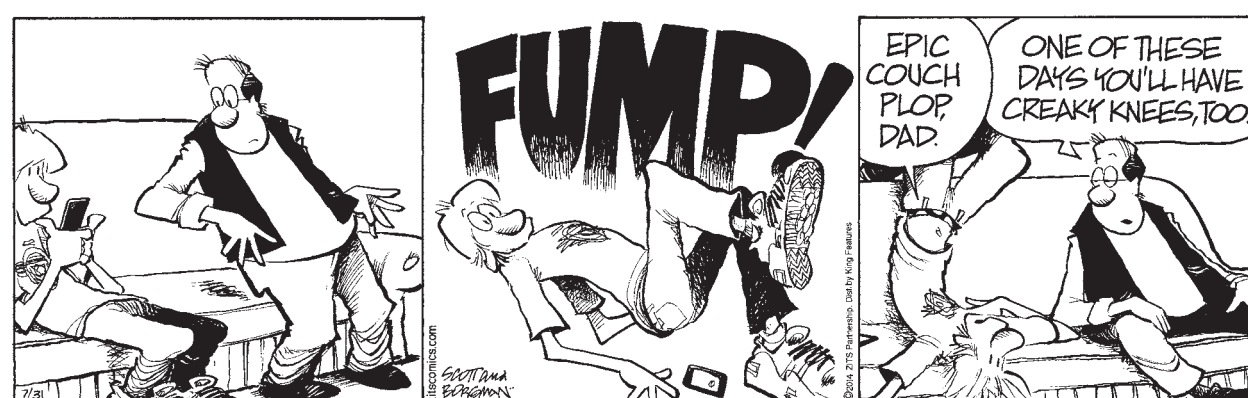
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

7		4				5		3
			2		7			
1				6				4
	2						9	
		5				6		
	8						1	
3				5				9
			1		3			
5		8				4		2

Difficulty Level ★★★

7/31

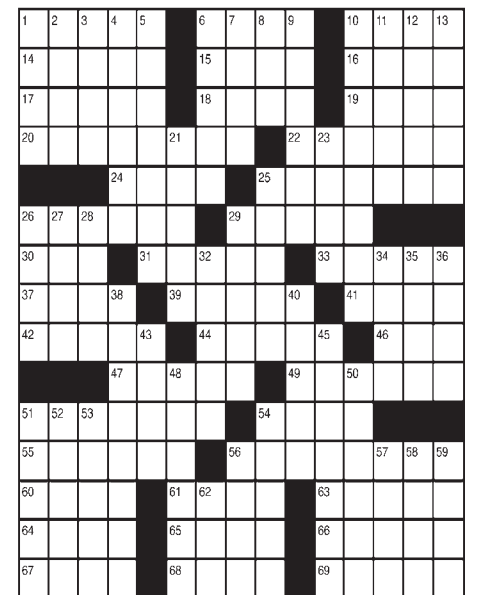
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

9	6	4	1	8	3	7	5	2
3	1	5	2	4	7	6	9	8
8	7	2	9	6	5	4	1	3
4	5	9	7	3	2	8	6	1
6	3	8	4	5	1	9	2	7
7	2	1	8	9	6	3	4	5
2	4	6	3	1	8	5	7	9
1	9	3	5	7	4	2	8	6
5	8	7	6	2	9	1	3	4

ACROSS

- Embarrass
- Slightly open
- Cereal grains
- Hidden supply
- Sickly looking
- Uninteresting
- Stopwatch
- Like fine wine
- "Oh, for Pete's sake"
- Mississippi riverboats
- Appeared
- Angry speech
- Motives
- ___ matter; isn't important
- Untruthful folks
- Climbing plant
- Capital of South Korea
- Abundant in foliage
- Go off course
- Mario Andretti or Jeff Gordon
- Drastic; crucial
- Finished
- Staircase piece
- Gents
- Walked back and forth
- Stops
- Boxed
- Salary
- More uncanny
- Live together no longer
- Related
- Twiddling one's thumbs
- Leg bone
- Unable to find the way home
- Cleansing bar
- Stories
- Looks at
- Notice
- Wide-awake



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

7/31/14

5

- Hermits; band formed in the 1960s
- Take ___; disassemble
- Coughing spells
- Drink with foam on top
- Water parted by God
- ___ with; unable to stop thinking about
- Rental car company
- ___ aback; surprised
- Small outbuildings
- Go into
- British noble
- Vexes
- Shabby bistro
- Microwave, e.g.
- Watched
- Clear-thinking
- Rowed
- Goals
- Unrestrained

DOWN

- Play divisions
- Fishing worm, e.g.
- Peak
- Large scissors

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

NOW	AMPLE	BOWS
ALES	SALES	EARN
BEEP	SPENT	RHEA
SPECULATE	LUNG	
CORE	ELI	
ADMIRE	ROMANIAN	
BREAK	SOWED	DIE
BOLL	SAVED	LESS
ONE	RULED	DEALT
TEENAGER	RIFLES	
EGG	SEPT	
LIMA	EMPHASIZE	
ODOR	SALAD	SEAS
FLOE	TROVE	TURK
TEND	SEWER	SLY

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7/31/14

- Strong urges
- Tea variety
- Makes copies
- Get up
- Emotional
- Smack with an open palm
- Competent
- Bleachers level
- Vane direction
- Uno, __, tres...

Argentina

Continued from page 12

A one-month grace period on that payment was set to expire Wednesday. While a default would let loose the sharks of Wall Street, exacerbate a cash crunch caused by draining reserves and rock the final 15 months of Fernandez's rule, nobody predicted a repeat of the full-blown crisis seen in 2001, when unemployment skyrocketed and the presidency changed hands five times in little more than a week of deadly protests. One reason for the relative calm was that Argentina never fully recovered from that comeuppance. Unlike the 1990s, when the country loaded up on foreign debt as investors sung the praises of its then-dollarized economy, the country has been all but shut out of international capital markets for the past decade. That's forced it to become an involuntary paradigm of frugality in an era when the United States and much of Europe are struggling to

tighten their belts. Debt to gross domestic product, a widely-used measure of a nation's financial health, has fallen from 127 percent a decade ago to less than half that amount. The government's argument that it already has paid bondholders and that an activist judge is to blame for any ensuing fall-out appears to have struck a chord — at least for now. Polls show that most Argentines approve the government's tough negotiating stance. "They're trying to scare us and say that if we don't do what they say, we'll suffer the 10 plagues of Egypt," Fernandez argued Tuesday at a summit in Venezuela, where she won the backing of regional leaders. "Well, look, the 10 plagues of Egypt we already suffered in 2001, when another government exactly fol-

lowed orders coming from abroad." That's not to say a default would be cost-free. While Argentina is living within its means, it's mired in a recession, facing a severe dollar shortage and struggling to tame inflation estimated at around 40 percent. A default would batter investor and consumer sentiment even further and wipe out much of the progress Fernandez has made over the past year climbing back into Wall Street's good graces. That includes striking a \$5 billion deal to repay Spain's Repsol for the expropriation of its oil business, settling with the Paris Club of government lenders and even renewing contact with the organization Fernandez and her Peronist party blame for the country's 2001 collapse: the International Monetary Fund.

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U.S. cleans up at home but sends dirty coal abroad

DINA CAPIELLO

Associated Press

NEWPORT NEWS, Virginia

(AP) — As the Obama administration weans the U.S. off dirty fuels blamed for global warming, energy companies have been sending more of America's unwanted energy leftovers to other parts of the world where they could create even more pollution.

This fossil fuel trade threatens to undermine President Barack Obama's strategy for reducing the gases blamed for climate change and reveals a little-discussed side effect of countries acting alone on a global problem.

"This is the single biggest flaw in U.S. climate policy," said Roger Martella, the former general counsel at the Environmental Protection Agency under President George W. Bush. "Although the administration is moving forward with climate change regulations at home, we don't consider how policy decisions in the United States impact greenhouse gas emissions in other parts of the world." Carbon dioxide, regardless of where it enters the atmosphere, contributes to the sea level rise and in some cases severe weather in the U.S. and the world.

Over the past six years, American energy companies have sent more coal than ever before to other parts of the world, in some cases to places with looser environmental standards.

The consequence: It makes the U.S. appear to be making more progress than it is on global



In this July 24, 2014 photo, coal is unloaded at the Trianel power plant in Luenen, Germany.

Associated Press



In this May 22, 2014, file photo, sunlight reflects off of a chunk of coal at Dominion Terminal Associates' coal terminal in Newport News, Va. Hundreds of people across the country lined up Tuesday, July 29, to tell the Environmental Protection Agency that its new rules for power-plant pollution either go too far or not far enough.

Associated Press

warming. That's because it shifts some pollution — and the burden for cleaning it up — onto other countries. "Energy exports bit by bit are chipping away at gains we are making on carbon dioxide domestically," said Shakeb Afsah, an economist who runs an energy consulting firm. As companies look to double U.S. coal exports, with three new terminals along the West Coast, America could be fueling

demand for coal when many experts say most fossil fuels should remain buried to avert the most disastrous effects of climate change. But the Obama administration has resisted calls from governors in Washington and Oregon to evaluate and disclose such global fallout, saying that if the U.S. didn't supply the coal, another country would.

White House officials say U.S. coal has a negligible global footprint and reducing coal's use worldwide is the best way to ease global warming. The U.S. in 2012 accounted for 9 percent of worldwide coal exports, the latest data available.

"There may be a very marginal increase in coal exports caused by our climate policies," said Rick Duke, Obama's deputy climate adviser, in an interview with

The Associated Press. "Given that coal supply is widely available from many sources, our time is better spent working on leading toward a global commitment to cut carbon pollution on the demand side."

Guidance drafted by White House officials in 2010 did outline how broadly agencies should look at carbon emissions from U. S. projects. Four years later, that guidance is still under review.

"They have sat on their hands," said George Kimbrell, a senior attorney for the Center for Food Safety, which has sued the administration over this delay.

Changing the global system to account for production would carry political risks, especially for the U.S., which is trying to boost production of energy and exports even as it addresses global warming.

"The U.S. needs to be pragmatic on this," said Jason Bordoff, director of Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy. "If our coal exports are very small and having no or little impact on global greenhouse gas emissions ... the government has to take into account the economic and foreign policy costs of restricting exports." He was a National Security Council energy and climate change adviser to Obama until

January 2013.

Over the past six years, as the U.S. cut coal consumption by 195 million tons, about 20 percent of that coal was shipped overseas, according to an AP analysis of Energy Department data.

Less coal being burned here has helped the power sector reduce carbon emissions by 12 percent and left more U.S. coal in the ground. But a growing share is finding its way abroad.

Analyses suggest U.S. exports could be reducing by half or wiping out completely the pollution savings in the U.S. from switching power plants from coal to natural gas.

The nexus of the challenge can be found in and around Norfolk, Virginia, which exports more coal than any other place in the U.S. and is already experiencing one of the country's fastest rates of sea level rise.

When the Prime Lilly, a cargo ship, set sail from Norfolk recently, its 80,000 tons of coal were destined for power plants and factories in South America. The 228,800 tons of carbon dioxide contained in that coal disappeared from America's pollution ledger. But it still pollutes the planet. It's a planet hungry for American coal. U.S. exports to Germany have more than doubled since 2008, providing a cheaper alternative to cleaner-burning natural gas and a replacement for nuclear power, which is being phased out since the Fukushima disaster in Japan. Last year, Germany's carbon dioxide emissions grew by 1.2 percent, in large part because the country burned more coal.

German environmental officials say the recent boom in coal-fired power is making it harder for the country to meet its climate-protection goals, even as it has increased renewable energy and participates in a carbon market that has lowered emissions throughout Europe. □



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'Guardians' blasts Marvel in a different direction

DERRIK J. LANG

AP Entertainment Writer

BURBANK, Calif. (AP) — Despite its flawless superhero pedigree, there's always been apprehension about "Guardians of the Galaxy." Since the president of Marvel Studios first teased the possibility of making a movie based on the comic book about a team of intergalactic do-gooders, the proposition has been called risky — by critics, by fans and by Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige himself. That never mattered to writer-director James Gunn, the horror maven best known for 2006's "Slither."

"I could care less whether people think it's risky," Gunn said matter-of-factly earlier this month while reclining in a cushy black chair in a screening room on the Disney lot. It's the same intimate theater where Gunn recently finished work on digitizing and colorizing "Guardians," which is set for release Friday.

While the ensemble cosmic romp bears similarities to the superhero mash-up "The Avengers," which earned more than \$1.5 billion worldwide, "Guardians" features more obscure characters from the Marvel mythos and — other than a prologue chronicling the moment Chris Pratt's young Peter Quill is plucked from Earth — is set entirely in space.



In this Saturday, July 19, 2014 photo, from left, guardian cast members, Vin Diesel, Dave Bautista, Zoe Saldana, director James Gunn, and Chris Pratt pose for a portrait at Disney Studios during press day for "Guardians of the Galaxy," in Burbank, Calif. The movie releases on Friday, Aug. 1, 2014.

There's no mention of Captain America, no wink from Tony Stark, no baton passed by Thor.

"In a lot of ways, it's not a superhero movie," said

Gunn. "It's a space adventure. We're not just doing the Marvel thing again. It's different. We're expanding the Marvel universe. We're not replicating the Marvel universe in space. We're going about it in a different way." Gunn paused and reclined back further in his chair. "Yeah, it's probably risky."

Unlike 2012's "Avengers," which relied on five de-

cades of superhero history and five films to build up its team, Gunn was tasked with not only adapting a comic series that's only a few years old but also establishing comradery among a band of interstellar rebels that includes a lippy raccoon voiced by Bradley Cooper and a burly alien portrayed by wrestler Dave Bautista.

"It's a challenge because

nobody really knows who we are, and the cool thing about that is we're starting from scratch," said Bautista, who plays Drax the Destroyer. "We can make it whatever we want it to be. The possibilities are endless when you're talking about outer space and all these different civilizations. It can go as far as your imagination can go."

The movie's only connections to Marvel's greater cinematic universe are a more detailed look at the all-powerful Infinity Stones, as well as appearances by Thanos, the ginormous alien baddie glimpsed at the end of "Avengers." Gunn had to fight for the brief inclusion of the latter, who was originally envisioned as the film's main villain in a draft by co-writer Nicole Perlman.

"I wanted Thanos in the movie," said Gunn. "I wanted to be attached to 'The Avengers.' Admittedly, Thanos was a giant pain in the (expletive) because I had to talk with ('Avengers' writer-director) Joss Whedon and those guys. That was the one part where there were a lot of discussions."

Kristen Bell gets back to her 'Hair' roots

MARK KENNEDY

AP Drama Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Before she was Princess Anna in "Frozen" or even Veronica Mars, Kristen Bell was a musical theater geek. Now she's letting her roots show. Bell is starring in the irreverent, anti-establishment rock musical "Hair" at the 18,000-seat Hollywood Bowl amphitheater in Los Angeles for three shows starting Friday.

"Performing again onstage is wonderful — especially at a venue like the Bowl. It's enormous, dynamic and terrifying," she wrote this week via email. "I never thought I would perform in a place so big!"

Bell, who attended the

Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and made her Broadway debut in 2001 in the musical "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer," will play the hippie love interest Sheila and will get to sing "Easy To Be Hard" and "Good Morning Starshine."

Her co-stars include Sarah Hyland ("Modern Family"), Hunter Parrish ("Weeds"), Amber Riley and Jenna Ushkowitz (both of "Glee"), Benjamin Walker ("Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter") Beverly D'Angelo ("Coal Miner's Daughter") and Kevin Chamberlin ("In and Out").

"The process is so alive and energizing and terrifying," said Adam Shankman, who

directs and choreographs. He's prepared a staggering 42 numbers for the show, including some nudity, in a rehearsal time that's less than two weeks.

"This isn't easy in any shape or form, but it can be very, very fun and very rewarding."

For Bell, who was in a production of "Hair" in college, the move is a welcome one since she's now known more for her roles in Showtime's "House of Lies" and the feature "Forgetting Sarah Marshall."

"I definitely missed singing live and music in general," Bell wrote. "Music heightens any emotion so it is a wonderful tool to use when performing and storytell-



This image released by Davidson & Choy Publicity shows, from left, Adam Shankman, Benjamin Walker, Kristen Bell, and Hunter Parrish during a rehearsal for the musical "Hair."

Associated Press

ing."

"Hair," which has book and lyrics by James Rado and Gerome Ragni and music by Galt MacDermot, tells the story of two best buddies who find freedom in the 1960s preoccupation with sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll.

The hit songs include

"Aquarius" and "Let the Sun Shine In."

Bell together with Tony Award winner Idina Menzel made her own monster hits while recording the soundtrack to the animated film "Frozen."

She says she's proud she got a chance to sing in such a landmark movie.

ESPN suspends Smith for comments on abuse

DAVID BAUDER
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — ESPN has suspended outspoken sportscaster for a week because of his comments about domestic abuse suggesting women should make sure that they don't do anything to provoke an attack.

Stephen A. Smith's commentary occurred during a discussion on ESPN2's "First Take" last Friday about the NFL's two-game suspension of Baltimore Ravens player Ray Rice following charges he assaulted his now-wife. The remarks attracted widespread attention, including a stinging rebuke online from a fellow ESPN personality.

Smith issued an on-air apology Monday, saying it was the most egregious mistake of his career.

A day later, ESPN took action. The network's chief executive, John Skipper, told ESPN's staff in a memo it was done after a "thoughtful discussion" about appropriate actions with men and women in his company. "I believe his apology was sincere and that he and we have learned from what we've collectively experienced," Skipper said.

Smith will not appear on "First Take" or ESPN radio



In this Saturday, Dec. 12, 2009 file photo, Stephen A. Smith arrives at Spike TV's Video Game Awards in Los Angeles. Associated Press

until Aug. 6, the network said. During the Rice discussion, Smith alluded to women in abuse cases when he said, "Let's make sure we don't do anything to provoke wrong action ... we got to also make sure that you can do your part to do whatever you can do to make sure it doesn't happen again." Shortly after Smith's remarks, colleague Michelle Beadle responded on Twitter that "I was just forced to watch this morning's First Take. A) I'll never feel clean again B) I'm not aware that I can provoke my own beating."

Beadle, host of ESPN2's "SportsNation," continued with a series of tweets. □

George W. Bush writes book about father



This Oct. 25, 2009 file photo shows former Presidents George H. W. Bush, right, and George W. Bush before the Houston Texans NFL football game against the San Francisco 49ers in Houston. Associated Press

HILLEL ITALIE

AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — His paintings made news worldwide, but it turns out that former President George W. Bush has been working on another, highly personal project since leaving the White House: He has quietly completed a biography of his father, former President George H.W. Bush.

Crown Publishers told The Associated Press on Wednesday that the book, currently untitled, will be released November 11. In 2010, Crown published the younger Bush's million-selling memoir, "Decision Points." "George H.W. Bush

is a great servant, statesman, and father," George W. Bush said in a statement issued by Crown. "I loved writing the story of his life, and I hope others enjoy reading it."

According to Crown, the book will cover the elder Bush's whole life and his influence on his son, from George W.'s "childhood in West Texas to his early campaign trips with his father, and from his decision to go into politics to his own two-term Presidency."

The book will be "heartfelt, intimate, and illuminating," Crown publisher Maya Majee said in a statement.

"As the only father and

son to each have served as President of the United States since John and John Quincy Adams, George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush occupy a unique position in history," Majee said. "George W. Bush brings to vivid life his unique perspective of the personal qualities and principles that have animated George H. W. Bush's extraordinary life of service to country and family."

Financial terms were not disclosed. George W. Bush was represented by Washington attorney Robert Barnett, who also handled negotiations for "Decision Points." The relationship between the two presidents has long fascinated scholars, political insiders and the general public. Many have speculated that the younger Bush felt competitive with his father, driven to surpass him and to gain his approval.

George W. Bush first thought of the book around 2010 and began writing it two years later, consulting widely with friends and family members, including his father. The book is expected to be around 300 pages and Crown is planning a first printing of 1 million copies. □

Allison Williams headed skyward as NBC's Peter Pan

FRAZIER MOORE
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — NBC has picked its Peter Pan: high-flying "Girls" star Allison Williams.

The network announced Wednesday that Williams will play the boy who refused to grow up in NBC's new staging of "Peter Pan Live!" The live telecast of this musical classic will air Dec. 4.

The 26-year-old actress-comedian plays Marnie Michaels on HBO's comedy "Girls," for which she has recorded several songs. She is the daughter of NBC News anchor Brian Williams and has also appeared on "The



This May 5, 2014 file photo shows Allison Williams at The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute benefit gala celebrating "Charles James: Beyond Fashion," in New York. Associated Press

Mindy Project" and "The League."

NBC recently announced that Oscar winner Christopher Walken will play the villainous pirate Captain Hook.

"I have wanted to play Peter Pan since I was about three years old, so this is a dream come true," said Williams, who added, "What could go wrong in a live televised production with simultaneous flying, sword fighting and singing?"

This musical version of "Peter Pan" has a long tradition on NBC.

It opened on Broadway in 1954, starring Mary Martin as the flying boy and Cyril

Ritchard as Captain Hook in a pair of Tony Award-winning performances.

They reprised their Broadway roles in a live telecast of the production that aired on NBC in 1955, revived a year later with a second live telecast — and then, in 1960, with a new, videotaped "Peter Pan" that again starred Martin and Ritchard.

The upcoming "Peter Pan Live!" is a follow-up to the success NBC found with a live version of "The Sound of Music" in 2013 with Carrie Underwood. Neil Meron and Craig Zadan, who produced "The Sound of Music," are also working on "Peter Pan Live!" □

Corporate Artful Dodgers



PAUL KRUGMAN
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In recent decisions, the conservative majority on the Supreme Court has made clear its view that corporations are people, with all the attendant rights. They are entitled to free speech, which in their case means spending lots of money to bend the political process to their ends. They are entitled to religious beliefs, including those that mean denying benefits to their workers. Up next, the right to bear arms?

There is, however, one big difference between corporate persons and the likes of you and me: On current trends, we're heading toward a world in which only the human people pay taxes.

We're not quite there yet: The federal government still gets a tenth of its revenue from corporate profits taxation. But it used to get a lot more - a third of revenue came from profits taxes in the early 1950s, a quarter or more well into the 1960s. Part of the decline since then reflects a fall in the tax rate, but mainly it reflects ever-more-aggressive corporate tax avoidance - avoidance that politicians have done little to prevent.

Which brings us to the tax-avoidance strategy du jour: "inversion." This refers to a legal maneuver in which a company declares that its U.S. operations are owned by its foreign subsidiary, not the other way around, and uses this role reversal to shift reported profits out of American jurisdiction to someplace with a lower tax rate.

The most important thing to understand about inversion is that it does not in any meaningful sense involve American business "moving overseas." Consider the case of Walgreen, the giant drugstore chain that, according to multiple reports, is on the verge of making itself legally Swiss. If the plan goes through, nothing about the business will change; your local pharmacy won't close and reopen in Zurich. It will be a purely paper transaction - but it will deprive the U.S. government of several billion dollars in revenue that you, the taxpayer, will have to make up one way or another.

Does this mean President Barack Obama is wrong to describe companies engaging in inversion as "corporate deserters"? Not really - they're shirking their civic duty, and it doesn't matter whether they

literally move abroad or not. But apologists for inversion, who tend to claim that high taxes are driving businesses out of America, are indeed talking nonsense. These businesses aren't moving production or jobs overseas - and they're still earning their profits right here in the USA. All they're doing is dodging taxes on those profits. And Congress could crack down on this tax dodge - it's already illegal for a company to claim that its legal domicile is someplace where it has little real business, and tightening the criteria for declaring a company non-American could block many of the inversions now taking place. So is there any reason not to stop this gratuitous loss of revenue? No.

Opponents of a crackdown on inversion typically argue that instead of closing loopholes we should reform the whole system by which we tax profits, and maybe stop taxing profits altogether. They also tend to argue that taxing corporate profits hurts investment and job creation. But these are very bad arguments against ending the practice of inversion.

First of all, there are some good reasons to tax profits. In general, U.S. taxes favor unearned income from capital over earned income from wages; the corporate tax helps redress this imbalance. We could, in principle, maintain taxes on unearned income if we offset cuts in corporate taxes with substantially higher tax rates on income from capital gains and dividends - but this would be an imperfect fix, and in any case, given the state of our politics, this just isn't going to happen.

Furthermore, ending profits taxation would greatly increase the power of corporate executives. Is this really something we want to do?

As for reforming the system: Yes, that would be a good idea. But the case for eventual reform basically has nothing to do with the case for closing the inversion loophole right now. After all, there are big debates about the shape of reform, debates that would take years to resolve even if we didn't have a Republican Party that reliably opposes anything the president proposes, even if it was something Republicans were for just a few years ago. Why let corporations avoid paying their fair share for years, while we wait for the logjam to break?

Finally, none of this has anything to do with investment and job creation. If and when Walgreen changes its "citizenship," it will get to keep more of its profits - but it will have no incentive to invest those extra profits in its U.S. operations.

So this should be easy. By all means let's have a debate about how and how much to tax profits. Meanwhile, however, let's close this outrageous loophole. □



In 2014, No War Is an Island



DAVID BROOKS
© 2014 New York Times

It's amazing how much of the discussion of the Gaza war is based on the supposition that it is still 1979. It's based on the supposition that the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is a self-contained struggle being run by the two parties most directly involved. It's based on the supposition that the horror could be ended if only deft negotiators could achieve a "breakthrough" and a path toward a two-state agreement. But it is not 1979. People's mental categories may be stuck in the past, but reality has moved on. The violence between Israel and Hamas, which controls Gaza, may look superficially like past campaigns, but the surrounding context is transformed. What's happened, of course, is that the Middle East has begun what Richard Haass of the Council on Foreign Relations has called its 30 Years' War - an overlapping series of clashes and proxy wars that could go on for decades and transform identities, maps and the political contours of the region.

The Sunni-Shiite rivalry is at full boil. Torn by sectarian violence, the nation of Iraq no longer exists in its old form.

The rivalry between Arab authoritarians and Islamists is at full boil. More than 170,000 Syrians have been killed in a horrific civil war, including 700 in two days alone, the weekend before last, while the world was watching Gaza.

The Sunni vs. Sunni rivalry is boiling, too. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and other nations are in the midst of an intra-Sunni cold war, sending out surrogates that distort every other tension in the region.

The Saudi-Iranian rivalry is going strong, too, as those two powers maneuver for regional hegemony and contemplate a nuclear arms race.

In 1979, the Israeli-Palestinian situation was fluid, but the surrounding Arab world was relatively stagnant. Now the surrounding region is a cauldron of convulsive change, while the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a repetitive Groundhog Day. Here's the result: The big regional convulsions are driving events, including the conflict in Gaza. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become just a stage on which the regional clashes in the Arab world are being expressed. When Middle Eastern powers clash, they take shots at Israel to gain advantage over each other.

Look at how the current fighting in Gaza got stoked. Authoritarians and Islamists have been waging a fight for control of Egypt. After the Arab Spring, the Islamists briefly gained the upper hand. But when the Muslim Brotherhood government fell, the military leaders cracked down. They sentenced hundreds of the Brotherhood's leadership class to death. They also closed roughly 95 percent of the tunnels that connected Egypt to Gaza, where the Brotherhood's offshoot, Hamas, had gained power.

As intended, the Egyptian move was economically devastating to Hamas. Hamas derived 40 percent of its tax revenue from tariffs on goods that flowed through those tunnels. One economist estimated the economic losses at \$460 million a year, nearly a fifth of the Gazan GDP.

Hamas needed to end that blockade, but it couldn't strike Egypt, so it struck Israel. If Hamas could emerge as

the heroic fighter in a death match against the Jewish state, if Arab TV screens were filled with dead Palestinian civilians, then public outrage would force Egypt to lift the blockade. Civilian casualties were part of the point.

When Mousa Abu Marzouk, the deputy chief of the Hamas political bureau, dismissed a plea for a cease-fire, he asked a rhetorical question, "What are 200 martyrs compared with lifting the siege?"

The eminent Israeli journalist Avi Issacharoff summarized the strategy in The Times of Israel, "Make no mistake, Hamas remains committed to the destruction of Israel. But Hamas is firing rockets at Tel Aviv and sending terrorists through tunnels into southern Israel while aiming, in essence, at Cairo."

This whole conflict has the feel of a proxy war. Turkey and Qatar are backing Hamas in the hopes of getting the upper hand in their regional rivalry with Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The Egyptians and even the Saudis are surreptitiously backing or rooting for the Israelis, in hopes that the Israeli force will weaken Hamas.

It no longer makes sense to look at the Israeli-Palestinian contest as an independent struggle. It, like every conflict in the region, has to be seen as a piece of the larger 30 Years' War. It would be nice if Israel could withdraw from Gaza and the West Bank and wall itself off from this war, but that's not possible. No outsider can run or understand this complex historical process, but Israel, like the U.S., will be called upon to at least weaken some of the more radical players, like the Islamic State and Hamas. In 1979, the Arab-Israeli dispute looked like a clash between civilizations, between a Western democracy and Middle Eastern autocracy. Now the Arab-Israeli dispute looks like a piece of a clash within Arab civilization, over its future. □

Fantasy Sports Sites Draw the Real World's Attention

JOE DRAPE

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BOSTON - As with many startups, the idea was born from trivia that suddenly did not seem so useless - the statistics of professional athletes.

Even in his youth, Jason Robins was in touch with his inner Billy Beane, drafting and trading baseball players in fantasy sports

embraced gambling on fantasy sports, apparently aware that the passion for it is crucial to their bottom lines.

Major League Baseball especially has taken daily fantasy sports under its wing. It has a partnership with DraftKings, which offers a daily contest on MLB.com in which prizes include tickets to games

keeps people interested in the games.

"Season-long fantasy is a war of attrition. The cleverness here is that it's over quickly, and for a younger generation, it's more appropriate. It's where the people are. It drives traffic. It's not to make extra bucks for MLB.com. It is evolving, and we are continuing to evolve."

tention. Last year, FanDuel paid out \$150 million; this year, that figure is expected to more than double, to \$400 million.

"Leagues are very supportive of fantasy in general, including daily sports," said Eccles, whose company started in 2009. "We have had informal relationships with them, but we think that will change."

Daily fantasy sites have also benefited from a Justice Department crack-down on online poker. On April 15, 2011, a day now known to gamblers as Black Friday, the department seized the Internet addresses of three of the largest online poker websites and unsealed fraud and money laundering charges against the sites' operators. DraftKings and FanDuel, as well as larger sites like Yahoo, have tried to distance themselves from other kinds of online gambling, emphasizing that knowledge and skill are rewarded rather than pure luck. But the Fantasy Sports Trade Association, which has 170 members, recently hired lobbyists to track legislation that would make online gambling illegal across the country.

The companies want to protect the fantasy sports exemption of the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act, especially at this time of expansion, when major players like Yahoo and ESPN are deciding whether to enter the daily fantasy market. But daily fantasy websites still make up a relatively small market, and the companies' more immediate focus is on making sure fantasy players know the games are available.

DraftKings and FanDuel have promoted themselves with advertisements that have become ubiquitous on sports talk radio across the country, and both companies are offering grander contests and breaking into new sports as they vie for market share. DraftKings has been more aggressive, recently buying the New York-based DraftStreet - the No. 3 company in the space - and increasing its customer base by 50 percent. In a little over two years, it has gone from a seven-person company run out of an apartment with a payout of \$50 million to a more than 85-member outfit with offices in Boston and New York that are expected to handle more than \$200 million this year. □



Jason Robins, center, one of the founders of the fantasy sports leagues site DraftKings, and Blake Dunkel, a software engineer, at offices in Boston. Professional sports leagues — traditionally ferocious opponents of gambling on their sports, online or off — have quietly embraced gambling on fantasy sports, apparently aware that the passion for it is crucial to their bottom lines.

(Gretchen Ertl/The New York Times)

leagues. He was a marketing professional at Vi-staprint when he and two colleagues, who also had teams in numerous fantasy leagues, discovered an underdeveloped niche: daily fantasy sports websites, which let players put their Moneyball skills - and cash - up against others' while compressing the grind of a season into a single day.

Robins, 33, and his colleagues, Matthew Kalish, 32, and Paul Liberman, 31, launched their own site, DraftKings.com, in April 2012. They knew they could attract players, with each day offering an opportunity to build a new roster and to cash in. The surprise has been that professional leagues - traditionally ferocious opponents of gambling on their sports, online or off - have quietly

rather than cash.

That stance may be surprising for a league that barred Pete Rose for life for betting on games, but baseball executives see daily fantasy sports as an increasingly important part of their future.

In fact, Robert Bowman, the chief executive of Major League Baseball Advanced Media, the league's Internet company, said it was exploring a larger partnership with DraftKings and did not rule out the possibility of cash tournaments or other formats in which money is at stake.

"We have spent a lot of time inside here and talking to other outside experts and have concluded these are games of skill and adhere to the federal law," Bowman said. "It

The NFL declined to comment on its view of daily fantasy sports, but the league's lobbyists, along with lobbyists from other professional leagues, successfully pushed to exempt fantasy sports from the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act of 2006, which outlawed online poker and sports betting.

The NFL hosts season-long leagues on its website, provides fantasy analysis of players and winning strategies, and offers Fantasy Ultimate Experience Leagues, pay-to-enter contests with authentic jerseys and memorabilia as prizes.

Nigel Eccles, a founder of another leading site, FanDuel, said the success that daily fantasy sports had achieved in a short period of time had gotten the professional leagues' at-

In many respects, the general sports culture has caught up with the fans behind DraftKings and FanDuel. Fantasy sports place a premium on data, and technological and the statistical advances have made a nearly infinite amount of information available instantly.

While season-long fantasy games have long been a major business, with giants like Yahoo, ESPN and CBS hosting leagues, daily fantasy sports websites offer instant gratification.

Like a general manager in a professional sport, players are given a salary cap they cannot exceed in filling out their lineups. There are contests for as little as a quarter or as much as \$1,000, and total prize pools ranging from \$54 to \$100,000.